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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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.

RECEIVED 2280

JUN - 5 2015

1. Name of Property

Historic name: New Ulm High School

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing: _____

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

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

2. Location

Street & number: 1 N. State Street

City or town: New Ulm State: MN County: Brown

Not For Publication: N/A

Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

Barbara Mitchell Howard May 26, 2015

Signature of certifying official/Title: Barbara Mitchell Howard, Deputy SHPO, MNHS Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: _____ Date _____

Title : _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

Jon Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

7-21-15
Date of Action

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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION: school

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION: education-related
RECREATION AND CULTURE: theater

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19th AND 20th CENTURY REVIVALS: Classical Revival

MODERN MOVEMENT: International Style

MODERN MOVEMENT: Art Deco

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: CONCRETE

Walls: BRICK

STONE/ limestone

Roof: ASPHALT/ composition

Other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The New Ulm High School, completed in 1915, is located in New Ulm, Minnesota, a city of 15,000 residents in the south-central region of the state. The two-acre site, encompassing the entire block, is bounded by Center Street on the south, State Street on the east, First Street North on the north, and Washington Street on west. The Brown County Courthouse complex stands on an adjacent block, south across Center Street. The surrounding area to the north and west is a residential neighborhood. The west boundary of the New Ulm Commercial Historic District (NRHP) is located one block to the east.

The school, as built, represents three eras and consists of four distinct sections. The original school building was completed in 1915, designed by the architectural firm of Tyrie and Chapman. (Dates represent the year of occupancy.) It is a rectangular block, three stories with a full basement, laid roughly north-south paralleling State Street. With support from the Works Project Administration, major additions were completed in 1939, designed by the Mankato firm of Pass and Rockey. The south addition, with an auditorium/ gymnasium, uses Art Deco motifs, while the north addition, containing classrooms and a dining hall, mimics the 1915 design. Finally, in 1956, additional classroom space was added off the west

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side of the 1939 north wing, on the corner of First North and Washington Streets. Also designed by Pass and Rockey, it shows the influences of the International style, with wide horizontal bands of windows on the northern and southern facades.

Narrative Description

Exterior 1915 Building

The school sits on city block 106N, with the property bordered by concrete sidewalks. There are a number of mature trees and shrubs along the Center, State, Washington, and 1st North sides of the site. On Washington Street, there are two drives entering the school grounds, opening into a large parking lot encompassing most of the open space directly west of the building. (Photo #0008) Until its removal in 1973, an older building, known as the Emerson School, occupied the space west of the 1915 building. Based on interviews with former students, the two schools had no direct interior connection, although they shared the heating plant. (See Figures 2, 3, 10)

The original 1915 portion of the school is three stories in height and rectangular in plan. The building was designed in the Classical Revival style by the Minneapolis architectural firm of Tyrie and Chapman, with J. B. Nelson of Mankato as the general contractor. The main block, 155 feet in length, parallels State Street N., oriented north-south, with the primary entrance in the center of the east façade. (Photo #0001, #0002) The main entrance is about four feet above grade. The building has a concrete foundation, with a slightly projecting stone water table. There is no basement, although a crawl space provides access to utility lines under the 1915 building. When constructed, the lack of a basement was the “cause of considerable discussion,” with the architects contending, “[M]odern construction of school buildings has done away with the basement.”¹ The roof is concrete over steel joists with an asphalt composition seal.

The building’s plan is roughly H-shaped, plus a large center rear wing. The north and south ends of the central block have twenty-seven foot wide wings that project out six feet to the front (east) and about thirty feet to the rear (west). The rear center wing, originally holding a gymnasium and assembly room, is sixty feet wide and extends roughly sixty-four feet from the main block.

The design of the main (east) façade is symmetrical. The exterior uses brick manufactured by the New Ulm Brick and Tile Company, laid in an English cross bond. The color of the brick blends several tonal shades, ranging between a warm brown and a soft red. The brick walls are accentuated by a Kasota limestone sillcourse underneath the first-floor windows, with a row of patterned brickwork above the windows. Diamond-shaped stone insets delineate the space between the first and second stories, while inset rectangular marble panels are featured between the second and third stories. The second-story windows have a sillcourse of rowlock bricks, while the third story has a lintel course of soldier bricks. The long horizontal lines of the façade are enhanced by the flat roofline, with a raised cornice roughly two feet below the roofline. This metal cornice, painted a pale yellow, features modillions and dentils. On

¹ *Brown County Journal*, August 16, 1913.

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the first story, the corners of the 1915 building have raised brick quoins. The north and south elevations repeat the same design patterns.

The current windows were installed during modernizations in the early 1970s. Historic photographs show double-sash wood frame windows with nine-over-nine lights. The building's windows have sliding aluminum sashes, with insulating baked enamel aluminum panels in the upper portion of the opening. The main façade, excluding wings, has a window pattern of 1-1-4-1-2-1-4-1-1 (left to right) on all three floors, excepting the ground level with its entry. On the two wings of this façade, there are two rectangular windows on the first story, no windows on the second story, and a single window on the third floor. Although the windows have been altered, visually, the main facade maintains its historically appropriate architectural feel by retaining the original window openings.

Approached by a set of four concrete steps, the primary entry is located at the center of the State Street façade, extending four feet from the main block. The entry has double-leaf glass doors, with side and transom lights of tinted glass. The entry surround has decorative brickwork and inset marble panels. Above the entrance, the Kasota stone entablature reads, "High School." On the north side of the entrance, set in the sillcourse, a stone inset reads, "Tyrrie & Chapman, Architects."

The central rear wing is two stories in height, with common bond brickwork on the north and south, and English bond on the west elevation. A brick course divides the first and second floors. There are three sets of large rectangular windows on both stories of the north elevation, while the south elevation only has windows on the second story. These have multiple fixed lights above paired hopper style windows. The west elevation of this wing shows two windows on the second floor, with sliding sash windows in the lower portion and baked enamel aluminum panels in the upper portion. On the west side of the central rear wing, there is a flat-roof, one-story boiler room, with window openings on the north side, now filled with plywood. The west exterior wall of the boiler room has been stuccoed and painted. Originally, there were two secondary entrances to the rear (west), later incorporated into the 1939 additions.

Exterior North 1939 Addition

The 1939 north addition measures 60 x 112 feet. In materials and fenestration, it carefully blends with the earlier 1915 building. (Photo #0003) These features include the brick texture and color, the English cross bond pattern, the raised cornice, the brick quoins, and the stone sillcourse below the first-floor windows. Unlike the older building, this addition has a full basement.

The primary entrance is situated in the center of the wing, facing First Street N., with an entry block extending four feet from the main block. Tinted glass sidelights surround the double-leaf metal doors. They are reached from the sidewalk by nine concrete steps. On the east elevation of the 1939 building, there is a delivery entrance at ground level, providing access to the basement kitchen. Historic photographs show that, when built, this had a roll-up wooden garage door. At an undetermined later date, a single entry door replaced the garage door, with the rest of the opening filled with wood. A concrete ramp, suitable for vehicles, leads up to it. (See Figure 6 for historic view.)

Just outside this door, on the northeast corner of the property, there is a one-story metal storage building with a front-gabled roof, a roll-up garage door, and a single entry, metal door. The building is

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used for outdoor maintenance equipment. It was built after the period of significance and is noncontributing.

The 1939 north addition's rear (south) elevation continues the use of English bond brickwork, the first-floor stone sillcourse, brick quoins, and the raised metal cornice. Each floor has seven bays, with six having sliding double-sash windows in the lower window opening and a baked enamel panel in the upper portion. At the ground level, there is a well with steps leading to the basement. The seventh bay has a single-leaf entry door on the ground level, with rectangular windows between the upper floors to illuminate the interior stairwells. (Photo #0004)

Exterior South 1939 Addition

The auditorium addition, completed in 1939, is two stories in height and measures 128 x 106 feet. It has a rectangular plan and a flat roof. Although sympathetic to the original building in its use of brick and stone, the auditorium addition introduces significant stylistic changes. The exterior walls repeat the English bond brick found in the north addition and original building, again using varied hues of brick. The first-floor course extends to this addition as well, although Artstone is used in the addition rather than limestone. (Photo #0005)

Its main façade has a stepped roofline and three Art Deco-inspired central bays. Shallow brick pilasters divide these bays, each capped with a decorative Artstone piece. The pilasters give a strong vertical thrust to the addition. Each bay has a double leaf, aluminum frame door with a transom light above. The doors have a stylized Artstone entablature. On the upper wall in each bay, there is a rectangular, landscape-oriented two-pane sliding window with an Artstone sill.

The south elevation, facing Center Street, repeats the general motif. It has four bays, separated by shallow brick pilasters capped with decorative Artstone insets. The three westernmost bays have paired aluminum frame windows that are double-sash in the lower half, and filled with enamel panels in the upper half. In the light well, there are a series of windows (mix of casement and fixed) and a single door entry to the music practice room in the basement.

The west elevation essentially repeats this theme, with five bays, all with paired double-sash windows in the lower portion of the opening, and a single enamel panel in the upper portion. This elevation also features a one-story entry into a ticket office/ hall. The entry has a central double-leaf door with a transom light above. Single windows flank the door on either side, with four fixed panes using opaque glass.

Exterior 1956 Addition

The 1956 addition makes a stylistic break from the adjoining 1939 section to the north, reflecting the influence of the International style. (Photo #0006) The addition is three-stories high, although its overall height is roughly four feet less than the adjacent 1939 building. The addition is rectangular in plan, extending from the rear of the 1939 addition toward Washington Street. The exterior is sheathed in a reddish-brown brick, lighter in color than the brick on the adjacent 1939 addition. Brick is laid in a common bond pattern.

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The dominant feature is the band of windows on the second and third floors on the north elevation. These windows openings – six bays on each floor – use four horizontal rows of glass blocks over horizontally-oriented rectangular aluminum-framed windows. In this arrangement, the outside two windows have fixed panes while the inner two windows have a hopper-style window opening under a fixed pane. Buff-colored Artstone pilasters divide the bays, with that material also used for a sillcourse on all three floors.

On the First Street N. side, the first (ground) floor features two prominent five-sided bay windows. In addition, the windows on the first floor repeat the horizontally-oriented rectangular aluminum-framed windows on the lower portion of the opening, but with enameled aluminum panels in the upper portion (as opposed to the glass block on the upper floors).

On the Washington Street elevation, there is an entrance in the center, with a double-leaf aluminum frame door, sheltered by a flat overhanging portico. Above this entry, there is a vertical band of Artstone panels between floors, with a three-part window on each floor – fixed rectangular panes on either side of a baked enamel aluminum panel. On this elevation, to the north of this central bay, there are no windows, excepting three double-light horizontal windows to illuminate the basement. To the south of the entrance, each story has a horizontal row with sliding windows flanking Artstone panels with an Artstone sill. Along the foundation, there are two double-pane hopper-type windows.

The fenestration on the south wall does not repeat the horizontal bands of windows found on the north elevation. The west third of this wall has no windows, while the middle portion on each story shows a six-pane window and a three-pane window. On the east third of this wall, each story has three window openings, repeating the north side arrangement of four horizontal rows of glass blocks over horizontally-oriented rectangular aluminum-framed windows. There is a box-like, one-story entry extending off to the south, with a double-leaf, aluminum frame glass door on the south elevation. (Photo #0007)

Interior 1915 Building

The interior plan of the 1915 section retains its original configuration, although use has changed since the Middle School closed its doors in 2007. On each of the three floors, there is a long central corridor, running north-south, twelve feet wide, with large classrooms or offices on the east side (Photo #009, second floor corridor). On the west side of the central corridor, room use varies, with doorways providing access to a mix of smaller storage or special use rooms, the gymnasium on the first floor, and the library on the second floor. There are two stairwells, located on the north and south ends, built extending off the west side of the 1915 building. Large multipaned fixed plate windows illuminate the stairs.

Upon stepping through the main entrance from State Street, the visitor enters a small foyer, opening into the central corridor. On the first floor (known as the ground floor in the original plans), rooms included teachers' rooms, a domestic science room in the south wing, and manual training rooms in the north wing. Opposite the entrance is an additional set of stairs down to a gymnasium. The "small gym" is a rectangular room, 50 x 64 feet, with a floor of maple hardwood. The walls are finished to seven feet with a tan-colored glazed brick. Tall windows across the north side illuminate the room with natural light.

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The second floor included the superintendent's office, library, general offices, and five classrooms. Originally, use included two English classrooms, one history classroom, the Normal School, and a drawing classroom. Above the gymnasium is a large room, 50 x 65 feet, used at first as an auditorium, then as a library after 1939. The defining feature is the vaulted ceiling with large windows on the north and south walls. There is a stage, roughly three feet high, on the west side of the room. (Photo #0010, Figure 8)

The third floor held eight classrooms, originally used for science classes, commercial classes, mathematics, and German. Between the corridor and upper part of the library were a motion picture booth, a Latin room, and a janitor's room. There is a girls' restroom on the south end of the central corridor and a boys' restroom on the north end.

The school's interior retains much of its original finish. The corridor walls originally held coat racks, which were removed at an undetermined time.² The walls are plaster, and the ceilings have dropped acoustic panels. The floors in the halls are finished with terrazzo. The classrooms and offices retain much of their varnished oak wood trim, including door frames and blackboard surrounds, as well as the original interior doors. Most classrooms retain their original maple wood floors. Many classrooms have original built-in storage cupboards. (Photos #0011, 0012)

Interior North 1939 Addition

The primary entrance from the outside is from First Street North. There is a small vestibule with an oak doorway surround with sidelights and transom lights. The original double-leaf doors have been removed. The hallways, found on each floor, have a cream-colored tile wainscoting, distinct from the plain walls in the 1915 section. In the hallways, the walls are plaster above the wainscot, and the ceilings have dropped acoustic panels. (Photo #0013)

This 1939 addition retains its original room configuration, with wood doorway trim and hardwood floors in the classrooms. Many rooms retain their built-in oak cabinets, oak bookcases, and chalkboards. The first and third floors held four classrooms, while the second had three classrooms, plus restrooms and storage closets. The basement holds a large rectangular room with a tile floor, used as the dining hall. A second room, in the northeast corner, served as the kitchen, with small adjacent storage rooms and a walk-in refrigerator.

Interior South 1939 Addition

The gymnasium-auditorium was designed as a multipurpose space with an entry that could be accessed directly from the outside, avoiding passage through school halls. Entering the front doors on the east, the visitor steps into a vestibule with a ticket office on the north side. The walls in the vestibule and lobby feature polished cast stone, manufactured by Artstone. The auditorium is a large two-story space about eighty feet wide, seating around 900, split between about six hundred seats on the gently raked main floor and three hundred in the balcony accessible from the second floor. Heavy velvet curtains

² *New Ulm Review*, January 6, 1915. When it first opened, a local newspaper noted, "The casual visitor to the new building must be impressed with the lack of ornamentation everywhere."

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visually separate the stage and auditorium. The auditorium retains much of its original look, with light fixtures and some seating remaining in place. The floor is poured concrete with a tile finish in the aisle, while the walls feature large cast stone panels to a height of eight feet. Most striking are the three murals, painted under the auspices of the Federal Art Project by John Martin Socha. (Photos #0014, 0015)

To the north of the auditorium, there is a twelve-foot wide corridor, running east-west. Off the corridor, there are entrances into the auditorium, as well as stairwells down to locker rooms. This corridor leads to an entrance on the west side of the building, where there is a small vestibule with a ticket window.

In the basement, on the east half, there is a complex of rooms used by the music department. The largest room, used for band and orchestra rehearsals, is covered with carpeting on the walls to dampen sound. Off this room, on the west side, are several small studios for individual practice.

Interior 1956 Addition

In the 1956 section, there are three floors, with each floor organized around a central corridor, running east-west. On the east end, the corridors connect with the hallways of the 1939 addition. While the halls between the sections are level on the first floor, on the second and third floors, the 1956 hall is roughly four feet lower, necessitating steps up to the 1956 hall. There is also a chair lift. On the west side of the addition, the corridors end at a stairwell, with restrooms just to the south. Lockers line the walls on the three main floors, with a buff-colored tile continuing on other wall surfaces.

Classrooms are located on either side off the central corridor. Notable are the two kindergarten rooms on the first floor, on the north side of the corridor, with the large bays. The tile floors are original, with the alphabet inlaid in a circle. (Photo #0016) Other significant spaces include the second-floor art room (above the kindergarten rooms). It features original cabinetry and a dark room. The top floor holds four classrooms. In the basement, there is a performance space known as the "Little Theater" with a raised stage, tile floor, and vertical wood siding on the walls.

Integrity

The New Ulm High School displays a high level of historic integrity, exhibiting the essential physical features that convey its historic identity, including location, design, materials, and workmanship. The architectural detailing of the exterior has been preserved. The architects' plans, both in 1915 and 1939, were designed in anticipation of additions that would not obscure the primary facades. The exterior changes have generally been to windows and doors. All double-leaf exterior doors have been replaced with aluminum/ tinted glass systems. In the early 1970s, aluminum windows were installed on the 1915 building and the 1939 additions. The 1956 addition retains its original windows.

The interior possesses excellent integrity in design, materials, and workmanship. The interior retains the same floor plan as built. Some interior spaces have been renovated to meet contemporary needs, but hallways, stairways, classrooms, and especially the auditorium, generally keep their original finishes. The interior spaces include wide corridors with original tile flooring, and in the 1939 and 1956 additions, the

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original tile wainscoting. The classrooms retain floors, trim, and cabinets, and many have original blackboard surrounds.

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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.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION

Period of Significance

1915-1965

Significant Dates

1915, 1939, 1956

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Tyrie and Chapman, architects (1915)

Pass and Rockey, architects (1939, 1956)

J. B. Nelson, contractor (1915, 1939)

Engelen Corporation, contractor (1956)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The New Ulm High School is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, locally significant under Criterion A within the context of education. Representing three distinct eras, the building is an excellent representative of the transformation of public high schools in Minnesota during the period of significance, 1915-1965.

When the school opened in 1915, its curriculum reflected Progressive Era reforms embraced by its new superintendent of schools, Herman C. Hess. The "newer education" placed emphasis on practical

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training for those students not on a college track. Plans for the building included significant space for rooms for instruction in manual training, home economics, teacher training, physical education, and business.

The school played a role during World War I after Superintendent Hess became the director of the county chapter of the Minnesota Commission of Public Safety. Working from his office in this building, Hess supported efforts to suppress antiwar fervor in this largely German community. These actions led to years of political turmoil and culminated in Hess's ouster from the superintendency at war's end.

During the Great Depression, the school board obtained funds for construction of major additions through the Work Projects Administration (WPA), aided by the leadership of Linus Glotzbach, a local lawyer who was first district, and then, state administrator for the WPA. As such, the 1939 additions are significant within the context of federal relief construction in Minnesota, 1933-1941, notably for the connection to Glotzbach.

Following World War II, in the midst of the national baby-boom years, district student enrollment nearly doubled over a ten-year span, and the city responded with an addition to the school, completed in 1956.

The period of significance begins in 1915, when the high school opened, and continues to 1965, as the passage of fifty years is the minimum threshold for considering the eligibility of a property. The high school moved into a new building in 1966, leaving this property as the Junior High School.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Historical Background

Education played a central role in the history of New Ulm. In 1856 the Settlement Association of the Socialist Turner Society helped to found the city in association with the German Land Company of Chicago. The Turners originated in Germany in the first half of the nineteenth century, promoted with the slogan, "Sound Mind, Sound Body." Their clubs combined gymnastics with lectures and debates about the issues of the day. Following the Revolutions of 1848, substantial numbers of Germans emigrated to the United States. In their new land, Turners formed associations (Vereins) throughout the eastern, midwestern, and western states, making it the largest secular German American organization in the country in the nineteenth century.

Following a series of attacks by nativist mobs in major cities such as Chicago, Cincinnati, and Louisville, a national convention of Turners authorized the formation of a colony on the frontier. Intending to begin a community that expressed Turner ideals, the Settlement Association found a townsite along the Minnesota River, settled by Chicago Germans who had struggled here due to a lack of capital. The Turners supplied that, as well as hundreds of colonizers from the east who arrived in 1856.³

³ Alice Felt Tyler, "William Pfaender and the Founding of New Ulm," *Minnesota History* 30 (March 1949): 24-35; Grady Steele Parker, editor, *Wilhelm Pfaender and the German American Experience* (Roseville, Minn.: Edinborough Press, 2009).

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The Turners were freethinkers and placed great emphasis on education. The Association's charter, written by Wilhelm Pfaender, declared the purpose of the new town as:

To offer its members, aside from the basis of a secure existence, the benefits of a comprehensive, splendid youth education, and in general to concern itself with the promotion of trade and industry, the arts and sciences, and at the same time foster good German fellowship and the right spirit.⁴

As a representation of Turner ideals, the city plan reflected those values. The German Land Company hired Christian Prignitz to complete a new plat for New Ulm, filed in April 1858. This master plan for New Ulm expressed a grand vision of the city's future. At the heart of the community stood blocks reserved for Turner Hall, the county courthouse, and a public school, representing the political, social, and educational center of the community. The westernmost avenues were named after American heroes George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and Thomas Paine—the latter three noted for their freethinking philosophies. Members obtained the means to support themselves — in harmony with nature — through the distribution of four-acre garden lots located outside of the residential area. Historian Dennis Gimmestad wrote, "The founders' goals created a community persona that sets New Ulm apart from the Minnesota towns founded by land speculators or railroad companies. . . . The New Ulm founders aspired to establish a town with a defined philosophical, economic, and social character."⁵ To support the community's vision, income from the sale of select lots was set aside for education.

After the Civil War, Turners pressed forward with new ideas in education, organizing the New Ulm Academy in 1873 as the first high school in town, later opening a kindergarten in 1882. Turners dominated the school board in those early years, with public high school classes being held at Turner Hall. However, the town had been changing, with growing numbers of Lutherans and Catholics coming after the Civil War. The result was a bitter culture war during the 1890s, beginning with the opening of the Union School on the block next to the courthouse in 1884. By the time the battles ended in the late 1890s, under an informal agreement, school boards would include representation from Catholics, Lutherans, and Turners — a compromise that continued through most of the next century.⁶

The High School

The location of a school on this site goes back to the founders' goals. A city block was set aside for education, in what was the equivalent of the town square with adjacent blocks reserved for Turner Hall,

⁴ *New Ulm Pioneer*, 1 January 1858. Also see Jorg Nagler, "Frontier Socialism: The Founding of New Ulm, Minnesota, by German Workers and Freethinkers," in *Emigration and Settlement Patterns of German Communities in North America* by Eberhard Reichmann, LaVern J. Rippley and Jorg Nagler (Indianapolis: Max Kade German-American Center, Indiana University, 1995), 187-189.

⁵ Dennis Gimmestad, "Territorial Space: Platting New Ulm," *Minnesota History* 56 (Summer 1999): 340-350. Also see Rainier Vollmar, "Ideology and Settlement Plan: Case of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and New Ulm, Minnesota," address to the Brown County Historical Society, May 18, 1991, tape recording, Brown County Historical Society.

⁶ Noel Iverson, *Germania, U.S.A.: Social Change in New Ulm, Minnesota* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1966), 66.

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representing social life, and the county courthouse, representing the government. (See Figure 3) The first school on the site was erected in 1884 and became known as the Union School. By 1900, with a growing school age population, the school board erected a stand-alone high school building on the same block, known as the Emerson School. At the turn of the nineteenth century, the city had four elementary schools and 750 pupils.⁷

By 1913 the old Union School, used for high school and elementary classes, seemed inadequate as the population grew. In 1900 only sixty students attended the high school, but thirteen years later, 153 were enrolled. That year, the freshman class alone numbered sixty. Faced with a growing student body, Herman C. Hess, the school superintendent, called for construction of a new high school. More than a simple response to numbers, Hess also hoped that a new building would allow New Ulm to implement changes in instruction. "Is New Ulm ready for the 'Newer Education'," he asked at one community meeting in early 1913. To Hess, it meant, "In addition to the supplementary education furnished by the old time academies, we must take into account the value of a correlated course in manual training and in domestic industries. . . . Give the labor of the hand equal respect with that of the brain." He proceeded to outline the need for high school departments to meet that challenge. He also insisted, "Chief among these needs is one for a course in physical training. It does not seem fair to me for a whole community to expect a small body of men at their own expense to furnish the children of the city all the advantage of physical training and it seems to me that the time has come to make preparation for this branch of education in our schools." The "small body of men" referred to the Turners, who had provided the town with physical education since its inception.⁸

Three months after that speech, in May 1913, citizens voted on a crucial \$75,000 bond issue to finance the construction of new high school facilities. There was some opposition to the new school, primarily from residents who wished to see other improvements first. To assuage those voters, the school board promised a new grade school to north side residents. Even then, concern over the outcome led Philip Leisch, the editor of the *Brown County Journal*, to canvass the town "with his automobile, bringing in reluctant voters that could not be depended on to go voluntarily." In the end, the new high school was approved by a vote of 374 to 145.⁹

The school board promptly hired the architectural firm of Bell, Tyrie, and Chapman to design the building. The partnership was only four years old in 1913. Charles Emlen Bell was born in 1858 in McLean County, Illinois. After practicing for several years in Council Bluffs, Iowa, he established his reputation with the design of the Montana state capitol in 1898 and the South Dakota state capitol in 1904. By 1904 he had opened an office in Minneapolis. His work included courthouses for Martin County, (Fairmont) Minnesota, Cass County, (Fargo) North Dakota, and Brown County, (Green Bay) Wisconsin, all listed in the National Register of Historic Places. In 1909 he took on two partners: William W. Tyrie and George Chapman. Both came from New York state and graduated from the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. The pair practiced together in Ogdensburg, New York, for a few years until Chapman left for

⁷ *New Ulm Review*, January 10, 1900.

⁸ *New Ulm Review*, February 19, 1913.

⁹ *New Ulm Review*, May 14, 1913.

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Minnesota. In 1908 Tyrie followed his friend to the Twin Cities. Architect William Gray Purcell described the pair as “a couple of bright, energetic fellows, wise in business ways, experienced in architects’ conventions.”¹⁰

The partnership with Bell lasted only a few years. Two of their buildings — the Brookings County, (Brookings) South Dakota, Courthouse and the Brookings School — are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. In 1913 the partners went separate ways — after signing a contract and submitting the initial plans of the New Ulm High School, but before its construction. Tyrie and Chapman completed the project. These two men went on to gain a reputation as designers of educational buildings in Minnesota and South Dakota, including schools in Saint Cloud, Chisholm, International Falls, and Aurora, Minnesota. Their knowledge of school construction played a vital role in the firm’s success. The state department of education, through its administrative guidelines and a new office for school construction, pushed local districts to hire architects who specialized in such buildings.¹¹

In September 1913 the architects unveiled their plans, displaying the blueprints in the front window of Citizens Bank on Minnesota Street. The plans were for a three-story rectangular block that incorporated space for Progressive Era education, including a “large and modernly equipped gymnasium,” domestic science and manual training rooms, a drawing room “with a moving picture booth,” a normal school, and an assembly room located directly above the gymnasium.¹² Looking to the future, the architects noted that the new structure would be “so arranged as to make possible additions to the two wings projecting to the rear” without changing its symmetry.¹³

In January 1915 the school opened for occupancy. The *New Ulm Review* described the festive occasion: “Monday morning saw a grand moving day. High school pupils, teachers, and the Superintendent left the Emerson building bag and baggage for their new quarters. And into the Emerson building poured crowds of grade students coming from the various buildings all over town where they have been scattered since the old Union Building was torn down.” There was enormous pride within the community, as expressed by a newspaper commentator: “We have a high school building which, in point of attractiveness, comfort, thoroughness of construction, and equipment, seems likely to serve as a model to other southern Minnesota cities for years to come.” In the fall term, 233 students enrolled – a sixty-five percent increase in just two years.¹⁴

¹⁰ Ronald Ramsey, “The Strange Case of Charles Emlen Bell: An Episode in the Professionalization of Architecture,” Association for Practical and Professional Ethics Conference, Dallas, Texas (February 1998). Photocopy in North Dakota State University Library.

¹¹ Designed by Tyrie and Chapman, the Alexander Baker School (1914) in International Falls, Minnesota, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The firm later designed New Ulm’s Municipal Building, completed in 1919. It is listed in the National Register as a contributing building to the New Ulm Commercial Historic District.

¹² *New Ulm Review*, September 3, 1913.

¹³ *Brown County Journal*, August 16, 1913.

¹⁴ *New Ulm Review*, January 6, October 13, 1915.

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The Newer Education

The new school was a testament to the influence of Progressive Era thought in education. What we call the "Progressive Era" was a complex movement of diverse strains and interpretations. A key principle, though, was broadening the educational programs "to include direct concern for health, vocation, and the quality of family and community life." This meant that "traditional" instruction — reading, writing, and arithmetic — should be supplemented to classes that would improve the vocational skills of its students. The goal was a "wider high school" that ended the "divorcement of the technical or commercial high school from the old academic high school."¹⁵ In an influential book, *High School Buildings*, author William Bruce wrote:

The high school has entirely outgrown its academic limitations and traditions and has broadened its influence and its curriculum. Thus, industrial arts and household arts are no longer basement subjects; the natural sciences are now taught in a way to require diversified laboratories; the physical care of students has been extended to necessitate very complete gymnasias . . . ; and the movement for wider use of the school plant by adults has become a fixed fact. . . . The high school building of the present day is far more inclusive and complicated in the number and type of activities which it serves.¹⁶

These ideas filtered down rapidly to the local level. In a 1915 special edition of the *New Ulm Review*, a story, written by Superintendent Hess, offered a view of how theories of education were expressed in the physical layout of the new school:

In this finely appointed structure, we find ample and far-seeing provision made, not only for the academic courses above noted, but also for several other courses as follows:

1. Normal Training. This department offers strictly vocational work. Students having completed three or more years of high school work are admitted. Satisfactory completion of the year of work offered, including practice teaching, entitles the graduate to a First Grade State Teacher's Certificate, qualifying the holder to teach in any semi-graded or rural school in the state. The graduates of this department are rendering successful service in many districts in this and adjoining counties.

2. Home Economics. Thorough courses are offered to the girls of the seventh and eighth grades of the public and parochial schools, and to the girls of the high school in sewing, cooking, sanitation, and the various other subjects that distinguish the thrifty housekeeper.

3. Manual Training. Courses in bench work in wood are offered to the boys of the departments named in paragraph 2 above. Practical applications are emphasized thru out. Repairing of articles brought from home is a special feature. Woodworking machinery and courses in metalworking will be installed as soon as the demand appears to warrant.

¹⁵ Spencer R. Smith, "Preliminary Report of the Committee on Cosmopolitan High School," *Journal of the Proceedings and Addresses of the Forty-eighth Annual Meeting, National Education Association*, (Winona, Minn., 1910), 463; Lawrence A. Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1961), viii.

¹⁶ William C. Bruce, *High School Buildings* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1919), i. Bruce advocated the same position in an earlier edition, published in 1913.

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4. Commerce. This course represents the newest venture on the part of high schools in the smaller cities to meet the changing needs of the community. The local authorities felt that a strong commercial course in charge of an experienced instructor would meet a distinct need. Two subjects were kept in mind: a. To provide a course of general culture, equal in difficulty to that of any high school, but based on the commercial needs and activities of the community. b. To make a place where men of the middle and laboring classes may send their sons and daughters to receive instruction that may actually be used in earning their living. The poor man has a right to demand that his child shall receive free, in the public school what he is usually compelled to seek in a private business college at his own expense. There is every reason to believe that this department will become one of the strongest in the high school.

5. Evening School. This department, although but a fortnight old, has already enrolled nearly one hundred young men and women who are earning a livelihood during the day. Instruction is offered in Business English, Spelling, Commercial Arithmetic, Penmanship, Bookkeeping, Typewriting, and Stenography.¹⁷

Hess also believed that physical education — exemplified by the new gymnasium — was essential. However, he was reluctant to embrace another educational reform — an Agricultural Department. He wrote, “New Ulm is not now primarily an agricultural community. It is probable that our city will develop along manufacturing lines.” Recognized for his ability to implement the ‘newer education’, Hess served as president of the Department of Superintendence of the Minnesota Education Association in 1916.¹⁸

When the new school opened, these ideals were translated into the classroom, creating what Minnesota Superintendent of Education C. G. Schulz called “not only a high school but rather a University.” In September 1915 a night school opened with seventy-seven students enrolled. The course offerings included commercial arithmetic, typewriting, stenography, and “business English.”¹⁹ The Domestic Science classes proved popular. As a newspaper story reported, “Here is something that a father can appreciate when he sees that the taxes he pays go to teach his daughter how to prepare good wholesome, palatable food. Here is something that the general public can take an interest in as being something quite new in educational work in the city schools.”²⁰

The school’s impact reached beyond its walls through its teacher training department, or Normal Department, as it was usually called. Although Minnesota began a teacher training program in 1894, it remained relatively low-key until 1909, when the state superintendent of education issued guidelines that exempted normal department graduates from state teachers’ examination. Minnesota’s program was “planned to train students directly for the country school experience” and required “training centers located and organized to most effectively serve the state.” At its peak, in 1924, ninety-six departments had been established in sixty-five counties across the state.²¹

¹⁷ *New Ulm Review*, October 13, 1915.

¹⁸ *New Ulm Review*, October 13, 1915. An Agricultural Department was finally added in 1939, when space was allotted in the new classroom wing.

¹⁹ *Brown County Journal*, October 16, 1915.

²⁰ Schulz made these remarks at the dedication of the new school, *New Ulm Review*, March 17, 1915. Also see *New Ulm Review*, December 1, 1915.

²¹ H. E. Flynn, Inspector of Teacher Training Departments, in State of Minnesota, Department of Education, *Report, Teacher Training Departments in High Schools, 1920* (St. Paul, Minn.: Department of Education, 1920), 3.

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New Ulm opened its teacher training department in 1910. Among its early graduates was artist Wanda Gag, who taught for a year in a rural school in Bashaw Township. It proved to be a popular course, opening the doors for employment for women while supplying the rural school districts with teachers. To meet the demand, the new school building provided rooms for the department on the second floor. The extra space allowed the school to bring young children to the school for on-site teacher training. The *New Ulm Review* described the first such class in March 1915: "Twenty two cherubs and cherubines . . . had been carried, dragged, towed or otherwise persuaded to enter the High School Normal Department for the remainder of the school year. . . . The little scholars were not backward in letting their wants known; and whatever they wanted, they wanted badly." The normal department continued to train teachers in New Ulm for another fifteen years.²²

In addition, the high school shared its new, well-furnished manual arts and domestic science classrooms with students from local Catholic and Lutheran schools. The arrangement proved so successful that physical education instructor Herman Hein began to teach classes in the parochial schools.²³

World War I

The school building represented many Progressive ideals, including a belief that education would democratize the nation. As one speaker told the 1910 National Education Association (NEA) Annual Meeting, "I believe the American high school is destined to be our greatest democratic educational institution." If one goal of secondary education was to create good citizens, what would this institution's role be in New Ulm — where the German language was still commonly used in public events and private homes? How would the public school system respond to a multilingual society?²⁴

World War I brought these issues into the center of public discourse in New Ulm. Between the outbreak of war in 1914 and America's entry into the conflict, the citizens of New Ulm closely followed events in Europe, with the local newspapers sometimes printing news from relatives and friends in Germany. In an unofficial referendum in early April 1917, local voters opposed war by a margin of 466 to 19. Even as President Woodrow Wilson prepared his Declaration of War, a Brown County delegation arrived in Washington, D.C., to voice its opposition to that action.

On a national level, the Wilson administration organized an active campaign to suppress antiwar fervor, joined on the state level by Minnesota Governor James Burnquist. The Minnesota Commission of Public Safety was granted broad powers to protect the state and assist in the war effort. Specific actions taken by the commission included surveillance of alleged subversive activities, mobilization of opposition to labor unions and strikes, pursuit of draft evaders, and registration and monitoring of aliens.

²² *New Ulm Review*, October 12, 1912, March 24, 1915. Wanda Gag described her teaching year in Wanda Gag, *Growing Pains* (St. Paul, Minn.: Minnesota Historical Society, 1984), 134-143.

²³ *New Ulm Review*, September 8, 1920.

²⁴ C. P. Cary, "The Opportunities of the Modern High School," *Journal of the Proceedings and Addresses of the Forty-eighth Annual Meeting, National Education Association* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1910), 463.

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Given the German heritage of New Ulm, federal and state agents began to visit the city soon after America's entry into the conflict, filing reports to offices in Washington and St. Paul. Locally, several business and civic leaders joined in efforts to root out antiwar fervor. In May 1917 the superintendent of schools, Herman Hess, was selected as director of the Brown County chapter of the Commission of Public Safety. It was believed that his regular contact with students placed him in a good position to observe community life. Working from his office in this building, and corresponding using board of education stationery, Hess began to gather information about work and home, reporting back to state officials.²⁵

The role of the local chapter dramatically changed on July 25, 1917, when a massive rally, attended by 10,000 people, was held on the grounds of Turner Hall to, as a flier stated, "enter a protest against sending American soldiers to a foreign country." Speakers included Louis Fritsche, mayor, Albert Pfaender, city attorney and former minority leader of the Minnesota House of Representatives, Adolph Ackermann, director of Dr. Martin Luther College, and F. H. Retzlaff, a prominent businessman. Federal and state agents mingled through the crowd, gathering information.

A month later, Governor Burnquist removed Fritsche and Pfaender from their positions, while the Commission of Public Safety pressured the college to fire Ackermann. These blows sharply divided the community — on one side, many residents took the removals as an attack on the city's heritage and traditions. Albert Pfaender was the son, and Fritsche, the son-in-law, of the city's principal founder, Wilhelm Pfaender. On the other side, prominent local businessmen, including flour mill managers, feared economic repercussions and promoted pro-war parades and bond drives. The aftermath of the July rally defined local politics for the next four years, permeating every election.

These events garnered wide attention, with numerous Minnesota communities hosting counterbalancing pro-war rallies and the press condemning the city's Germanic sympathies. "New Ulm is darkness," wrote Charles Macomb Flandrau in the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*. The Princeton (Minn.) Union declared, "New Ulm, Brown county, where English is hardly ever spoken, is figuratively up in arms against the United States government." A columnist for the *Chicago Tribune* echoed the sentiment, stating, "The anti-draft meetings in New Ulm remind us that fifty-four years ago, the Indians massacred the population of that town. That is, fifty-four years too soon."²⁶

Throughout the war, Superintendent Hess funneled information to the state commission staff, reporting not only on general attitudes about the conflict, but also news about meetings of local labor

²⁵ *New Ulm Review*, May 23, 1917. For an overview of these events, see Carl H. Chrislock, *Watchdog of Loyalty: The Minnesota Commission of Public Safety During World War I* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1991). Hess collected information about local activities and conducted surveys of farm production and the use of foodstuffs. With war rationing, homes were sometimes checked for hidden stores of sugar and flour. This was confirmed through interviews by the author with Kathryn Hohn Doty and Marion Pfaender Downs, whose parents played a significant role during the war years.

²⁶ *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, September 2, 1917; *Princeton Union*, July 26, 1917. Also see *New York Tribune*, November 25, 1917, which labeled the rally as "the first public exhibition" of a "concerted movement in support of measures to hamper the prosecution of the war."

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unions and rallies held by the Nonpartisan League. (See Figure 14 for an example of Hess's reports to the state commission.) Even after the Armistice was signed in November 1918, Hess remained active, testifying in the trial of the League's founder, Arthur C. Townley. The League advocated economic reforms to improve the economic condition of farmers through regulation of middlemen in the grain elevator, packinghouse, stockyard, and cold storage industries. The federal government, joined by Minnesota governor Burnquist, attacked League leaders as socialists and Bolsheviks. The charges against Townley, for which he was convicted, were based, in part, on speeches that he gave in New Ulm.

Hess also moved against compulsory instruction in German. At the beginning of the war, German language instruction was integral to the local education, with required classes beginning in the sixth grade. The high school library — which served the whole city in lieu of a public library — included around 150 works in German and students presented German language plays at nearby Turner Hall. On the streets of New Ulm, it was common to stand on a street corner and overhear a conversation in German. Hess hoped to temper this enthusiasm, and with the school board's consent, removed the requirement for students in grades four through six.²⁷

In the war's aftermath, the city's deposed leaders received some small measures of vindication. School Superintendent Hess paid a price for his role as director of the Brown County Public Safety Commission. In a school board election in 1919, the vote became, in effect, a referendum on his service as its county director. Voters turned out to elect W. T. Eckstein and Dr. J. H. Vogel by a four to one margin over the incumbents, H. L. Beecher and Herman Held. Albert Steinhauser, editor of the *New Ulm Review*, wrote:

The awful drubbing administered is no reflection on the honor or the personal popularity of the defeated gentlemen. The issue was made on retaining Supt. H. C. Hess and the result shows that an overwhelming majority of the people of New Ulm do not want Mr. Hess as the head of their public school system. Both Mr. Beecher and Mr. Held are men of integrity and good business sense. But as members of the Board of Education, they have allowed Mr. Hess to act the autocrat and to lord it over themselves as well as over the people of the city. The education of the youth of the land is one of the things that lies nearest to the hearts of the citizens, and they demand that their representatives reflect their own desires in hiring and controlling those who are placed as teachers over their children.²⁸

Hess, protected by the previous board with a two-year contract, remained in his office until the spring of 1920. In April of that year, the new school board moved to return German language instruction "to its pre-war status," which included compulsory classes for grades fourth through eighth. Even in his tenuous position, Superintendent Hess tried to erect a roadblock, and dashed off a letter of complaint to the state Department of Education. We do not have Hess's letter, but the response, written by P. C. Topping, Deputy Commissioner of Education, makes clear the intent. Topping wrote:

I have yours of the 8th, setting forth the action taken by your board in restoring compulsory instruction in German. . . . There is nothing in the state laws or in the rules of the State Board forbidding instruction in a

²⁷ *New Ulm Review*, February 7, 1917.

²⁸ *New Ulm Review*, July 23, 1919. Steinhauser was arrested in 1918, charged under the Espionage Act for printing articles deemed disloyal in the *New Ulm Review*.

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foreign language in the elementary grades. This would indicate that the school board may make a foreign language a prescribed subject, which ordinarily would be interpreted to mean a subject that every child in the grade specified could be required to take. I am sorry that I cannot give you a more encouraging report.²⁹

By the time the letter became public, the battle for control over the school system was over. After the new board refused to renew Hess's contract, he took a job as a salesman, never working in education again. Although there was a change in administration, the school board's agreement with the general principles of progressive education remained unchanged. In response to questions about the city's loyalties, one new course offering was an adult citizenship class, inaugurated in 1922. Herman Hein, a staunch Turner and physical education instructor in the public schools taught the fourteen students who signed up.³⁰

The auditorium became a popular venue for community programs. Samuel Challman, the state supervisor for Construction of School Buildings, commented on "the beauty of the great assembly hall; its massive strength combined with the great amount of open space and light . . . were seldom equaled." The hall remained busy throughout the year, hosting public lectures, lyceum programs, and class plays. One notable career began in this room. For a decade, New Ulm held community sing programs, with the music ranging from Verdi choruses to Irish ditties. In 1917 concertina player John Wilfahrt performed in front of a large audience for the first time. As "Whoopee John" he would have a long recording and radio career as a foremost ambassador of "Old Time Music."³¹

Expansion and the Works Progress Administration

By 1936 there was a drumbeat for expansion of the school, driven by the need for additional classroom space and a larger auditorium. Local civic leaders also understood that federal dollars might be available from one of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs. The number of high school students had doubled from 1915 levels, partly due to increased population, but also the result of a growing percentage of youth enrolling and staying in high school. This followed a national trend. Historian Joel Spring observed, "It was during the 1920s that the high school truly became an institution serving the masses." By 1930 forty-seven percent of youths between the ages of fourteen and seventeen, or 4,399,422 students, were in high school. During the Depression years of the 1930s, the American high school began to serve the majority of youths — enrollments increased to 6,545,991 in 1940, representing two-thirds of the population between the ages of fourteen and seventeen.³²

As early as September 1935, the school board had begun studying the need for more space. In particular, the auditorium lacked capacity for the entire student body. A newspaper editorial explained,

²⁹ *New Ulm Review*, April 7, September 15, 1920. Later, the state attorney general's office wrote a letter to newly-appointed Superintendent Albert Gloor, warning of a loss of state aid if German remained compulsory. As a compromise, New Ulm allowed students to withdraw from those classes if they had a signed note from their parents. *Brown County Journal*, August 28, 1920.

³⁰ *New Ulm Review*, January 4, 18, 1922.

³¹ *New Ulm Review*, September 1, 1915, January 31, February 28, 1917, August 9, 1922.

³² Joel Spring, *The American School, 1642-1993*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994), 214.

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“True, some of the departments are quite crowded, at present, and could use more room, but the congestion is felt most in the auditorium.”³³ To develop preliminary plans and create budgets, the board hired the Mankato architectural firm of Pass and Rockey, assisted by the engineering firm of Ross and Harris.

Pass and Rockey specialized in school construction and worked on nearly 200 schools in southern and southwestern Minnesota. Born in 1891 in Mankato, George Pass Jr. attended schools in his hometown, and graduated from the University of Minnesota. For seventeen years, Pass worked with his father, also a prominent architect. Paul Rockey began working with the father and son in 1920, following his graduation from the University of Illinois. In 1927 the firm reconstituted itself and added Rockey as a full partner. In addition to schools, the firm designed many significant buildings in Mankato, including the *Mankato Free Press* building, Landkamers furniture store, and the Citizens Telephone building.³⁴

The architects released their plans in the summer of 1936. The new south wing would hold a large auditorium/ gymnasium, new locker rooms, and soundproof rooms in the basement for the music department. The north addition included classrooms, a drawing/ art room, a metal shop, and expanded space for the agriculture department. In the basement, there was a dining room (as it was called at the time) plus kitchen.³⁵

However, progress came to a halt in August 1936 when voters rejected a proposed bond issue by a substantial margin, with many fearing that delayed Public Works Administration (PWA) funds would never materialize.³⁶ The board of education brought the issue before the voters again in January 1937, this time with suggestions that state aid might be withheld if changes were not made. The bond issue passed by an overwhelming vote of 1,307 to 278. When the PWA failed to act, the board then turned to the Works Progress Administration (WPA) for construction funds, which, in New Ulm, meant walking two blocks to the district WPA office headed by Linus Glotzbach.³⁷

Glotzbach was a New Ulm lawyer, who became influential in Brown County's Democratic Party. In July 1935 he was named District Nine Director of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). With headquarters in New Ulm, his jurisdiction covered sixteen counties in southern Minnesota. In 1938 Glotzbach was named to the State of Minnesota WPA directorship. In February 1940 he became Regional Director with jurisdiction that covered states in the upper Midwest. His work brought numerous

³³ *Brown County Journal*, September 6, 1935.

³⁴ *Brown County Journal*, January 13, 1936; *Mankato Free Press*, February 7, 1959, November 6, 1979; “Pass & Rockey,” *American Architects Directory* (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1955), 422. The firm designed the Glencoe Public School, listed in the National Register of Historic Places. They also designed an addition to the Morris, Minnesota, High School, a National Register property.

³⁵ The dining room introduced a significant educational reform to the high school, as WPA funds paid for lunches. Prior to the New Deal program, there were only about 64,500 school cafeterias operating in the country. Gordon W. Gunderson, “The National School Lunch Program: Background and Development.” U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1971.

³⁶ *Brown County Journal*, August 7, 1936.

³⁷ *New Ulm Review*, November 6, 1939.

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government and political leaders to New Ulm. Among them was federal WPA director Harry Hopkins, a close advisor to President Franklin Roosevelt and a principal architect of New Deal relief programs. Hopkins visited the city in 1938, during the construction phase of the school additions. At the time, he remarked, "I would rather have the friendship of (people like) Linus Glotzbach than anything else public life can give."³⁸

Glotzbach's work was not done after securing approval for school construction funds. He delivered another plum when, in March 1939, the school received notification that the Federal Art Project of the WPA had awarded a grant that would pay for three murals for the school's new auditorium. As Florence Kerr, Assistant Administrator of the Works Progress Administration, recalled about Glotzbach: "He was very vocal, did a lot of talking, and consequently was quite influential. He didn't always get all he wanted, but he did get a lot of it. He fought for what he wanted."³⁹

John Martin Socha, the chosen artist, visited the city, conferring with Fred Johnson, founder of the Brown County Historical Society, as to the subjects. The selected scenes, drawn from regional history, included the treaty of Traverse de Sioux, the battle of New Ulm, and a third mural depicting the "progress of industry in New Ulm." The New Ulm murals reflected the influence of Diego Rivera, whom Socha studied under in Mexico. They are considered among the best works produced by the artist, whose murals also adorned the walls of the Federal Reserve Bank in Minneapolis, the auditorium of the Winona State Teachers' College, St. Luke's Catholic Church of St. Paul, and St. Paul Park High School. Socha's work can also be found in the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C., the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, the Art Institute of Chicago, as well as the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.⁴⁰

When the new school opened, a local newspaper reported, "The new high school was probably the most ambitious school the WPA has undertaken in the state. There have been bigger projects, but no larger school building built by the WPA in Minnesota anywhere." When the school additions were dedicated in November 1939, the *New Ulm Daily Journal* declared, "New Ulm is deeply indebted to its own son, Linus Glotzbach, whose interest in the city and its welfare caused him to exert more than ordinary means to give New Ulm a model school."⁴¹

On a personal level, student Ray Wieland praised the additions, stating, "In every one of our classes last year, we were crowded, seats were pushed together, teachers got crabby from being overworked, and

³⁸ Author interview with George Glotzbach, son of Linus, September 6, 2014.

³⁹ Oral history interview with Florence Kerr, October 18-October 31, 1963, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. The *New Ulm Daily Journal* estimated that the WPA brought \$1,100,000 into New Ulm's economy. *New Ulm Daily Journal*, November 6, 1939.

⁴⁰ *New Ulm Daily Journal*, March 20, 1939. The murals were painted on canvas, and first exhibited at the Walker Art Center, then brought to the school and mounted on the wall. See Kenneth E. Hendrickson, Jr., "The WPA Federal Art Projects in Minnesota, 1935-1943," *Minnesota History* (Spring 1993), 170-183.

⁴¹ *New Ulm Daily Journal*, November 6, 1939. The truth of the newspaper's claim about the comparative size of the project is uncertain, but it illustrates the city's esteem for Glotzbach's work.

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it was a mess in general. But that's all changed this year. We have plenty of room, and believe it or not, the teachers are really pleasant."⁴²

The auditorium addition provided the community with its largest hall, and it is still used for public programs and sports. The classroom addition brought needed space to alleviate overcrowding, but it also allowed the school district to expand its offerings. For example, although women had participated in physical education from the town's earliest days, in 1939, the district hired its first director of girls' physical education. That same year, the high school initiated a guidance department and hired a vocational coordinator for the first time.⁴³

The Agriculture Department was one of the key new programs. This course of instruction was offered to attract students from the surrounding farms and villages, and around 150 pupils enrolled in the first year. To make attendance easier, the district started school bus routes to outlying Cambria, Searles, Cottonwood and Milford. Once at school, the student's social transition from farm to town was eased by the formation of a Future Farmers of America club. In addition, the new lunchroom made it "much easier for country students who cannot go home to eat dinner." The school reached out to adult farmers as well, offering popular night school agriculture classes in bookkeeping and mechanics. In the first year, sixty-four students enrolled in classes.⁴⁴

A Postwar Addition

The post-WWII years proved to be a time of transition for New Ulm. In common with the rest of the country, these were the years of the baby boom, and local school system enrollment jumped seventy-nine percent between 1947 and 1955. As elementary schools filled to overflowing and the children worked their way up through the grades, it allowed a window of opportunity for classroom expansion before they reached high school. Supporting a substantial school addition, the *New Ulm Daily Journal* declared, "You can't argue with the stork."⁴⁵

It was more than the stork. Brown County had nearly 100 common schools, and the state department of education increasingly pressured rural districts to consolidate. In 1949 the Minnesota legislature passed a bill to pay for tuition and transportation for seventh and eighth grade students in rural districts so they could attend school in a nearby town. In Brown County, this legislation opened the door for an influx of students into the New Ulm public schools, as rural school districts began to drop those grades.

The push for new space was also driven by changes in the local economy. One of New Ulm's most significant industries, the Eagle Roller Mill, was sold in 1953, with many of its operations transferred out of town. In addition, another old business, Cudahy Packing Company, closed its local plant, representing the loss of around forty jobs. In response, civic leaders formed New Ulm Industries to recruit businesses

⁴² *New Ulm Daily Journal*, November 6, 1939.

⁴³ Harold C. Bauer, Superintendent, *First Annual Report of the Superintendent of Schools*, Independent School District No. 1, Brown County, Minnesota, 1938-39, 18.

⁴⁴ *New Ulm Daily Journal*, November 6, 1939. In oral history interviews conducted by the author, several former students commented on the country/ town adjustment.

⁴⁵ *New Ulm Daily Journal*, July 1, 1955.

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to relocate to town. This proved successful, as Kraft Foods opened a major plant in 1953, followed soon after by electronics manufacturer Webcor. In their recruitment efforts, the city recognized that a good quality school system was essential when trying to attract outside investment. A promotional flier, supporting the addition, noted, "Schools grow with the community. New industries bring more homes. More homes mean more children. More children mean more classrooms."⁴⁶

Based on a board of education recommendation to expand its facilities, voters were presented with a \$100,000 bond issue in July 1955. The district had been investing funds and was ready to finance most of the \$330,000 construction cost from those reserves. Emphasizing their prudent management, Superintendent J. M. Hermann noted that this had been anticipated many years before, writing, "The present wing on First North was planned to permit extension to Washington. Location of the additional classrooms will provide flexibility of space for both elementary grades and high school as needs change."⁴⁷

Following the bond issue's overwhelming approval, the board hired Pass and Rockey, the same architectural firm that designed the 1939 addition. Ground was broken on October 17, 1955. The new wing included three floors and a full basement, adding eight standard classrooms. Four additional rooms met particular educational needs. Looking at demographics, the school board anticipated overcrowding as children entered the system, appearing first, of course, in kindergarten. Rather than add to existing elementary schools, the board decided to centralize kindergarten in the new building, with two other classes in the adjacent Emerson school. The new addition's first floor featured two kindergarten rooms, complete with "large window space. . . . Adding a little something extra is bay window arrangements in both classrooms."

Class offerings in the arts expanded as well. The second floor held a large art room, with a dark room and clay washing area. In the basement, a "little theatre" had seating for 180 pupils, offering a venue for practice and performances for drama and music classes. With access from the Washington Street entrance, the theatre could be reached without going through the classroom areas. It became a popular venue for community programs.⁴⁸

When its doors opened in late 1956, the third-floor classrooms were unoccupied, ready for the expected population growth. Within a year, the space was needed. In addition, Pass and Rockey planned the new wing so that another addition could be added to its south along Washington Street.

With the closing of many rural schools in Brown County, responding to a state mandate, more elementary level students entered the local system every year. In 1961 the district boundaries were redrawn, and District #1 — bounded by the city limits — added twenty-one common school districts, covering 170 square miles. It was renamed District #83. The changes set in motion the events that led to the construction of a new high school on the north side of town. A School Facilities Study Group, with forty-three community members, was formed, and began work with an architect to develop plans. In

⁴⁶ *New Ulm Daily Journal*, December 29, 1952; January 2, 1953; July 1, 1955.

⁴⁷ *New Ulm Daily Journal*, June 28, 1955. The bond issue was approved by a vote of 350 to 31.

⁴⁸ *New Ulm Daily Journal*, June 28, 1955.

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October 1963 voters approved construction of the new building, which opened in September 1966 with 607 students enrolled.

The former high school building then housed the Junior High School only, with grades seven through nine. This change gave impetus to building renovations, which a newspaper article described as tuckpointing, installation of a sprinkler system and fire doors, corridor remodeling, and replacement of wood windows with aluminum frames. The cost ran to "several hundred thousand dollars." The school board also decided to demolish the old Emerson School in August 1973.⁴⁹

In May 2007 the last students walked down the halls of the building. Because of declining enrollment, the Middle School (as it was known then) relocated its classes to the new high school. As the doors closed on the final class, one eighth-grade student remarked, "This is the same building our grandparents and parents went to. It would have been nice to keep it for our brothers and sisters, for future generations." It is currently used for District #88 offices and the State Street Theater Company.

Conclusion

The building served as the city's public high school between 1915 and 1966, providing the space and facilities to educate generations of young adults. Its plans reflected many of the core concepts of the Progressive Era, with rooms built for classes in home economics, manual arts, teacher training, and commerce. The school played a role in local events during World War I. In an attempt to control and suppress antiwar fervor in this German community, the Superintendent of Schools, Herman Hess, working from his office on the second floor, served as director of the Brown County Commission of Public Safety. His actions, with the consent of the school board, divided the city and influenced the state's response to radical political organizations during the war years.

Twenty years after World War I, in the midst of the Great Depression, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal programs poured money into construction projects and employed thousands of workers. After the Public Works Administration turned down the city's request for school construction funds, Linus Glotzbach, the district, and then state, director of the Works Progress Administration, took up the cause. He pushed through the school board's WPA application, resulting in major additions to the original school as well as Federal Artist Program murals for its new auditorium. While Glotzbach brought several other projects to his hometown, the school stands as the best and most enduring example of his leadership. From its construction in 1939, the auditorium served as an important venue for cultural events.

In response to a dramatic increase in student population following World War II, a third phase of construction expanded facilities in 1956.

For these reasons, the New Ulm High School is historically significant under Criterion A as the central building in the development of public secondary education in New Ulm during the period of significance.

⁴⁹ *New Ulm Daily Journal*, April 2, 6, 1971.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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Newspaper Sources

New Ulm Daily Journal

New Ulm Review

Brown County Journal

New Ulm High School
Name of Property

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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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: Brown County Historical Society

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): MN SHPO: BW-NUC-666

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

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Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 15 | Easting: 383322 | Northing: 4907580 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The property includes all of New Ulm Block 106 North. This is Brown County Parcel Number: 001.001.106.00.100.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This is the property boundary that is historically associated with the school.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Daniel J. Hoisington
organization: Hoisington Preservation Consultants
street & number: P. O. Box 13585
city or town: Roseville state: MN zip code: 55113
e-mail djh@hoisingtonpreservation.com
telephone: 651-415-1034
date: February 15, 2015

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

New Ulm High School
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- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: New Ulm High School

City or Vicinity: New Ulm

County: Brown

State: MN

Photographer: Daniel J. Hoisington

Date Photographed: April, May, September, November 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo #001 (MN_Brown County_New Ulm High School_0001)
Overview, 1915 building, east elevation, view to west.

Photo #002 (MN_Brown County_New Ulm High School_0002)
1915 building, east elevation, view to south.

Photo #003 (MN_Brown County_New Ulm High School_0003)
1939 classroom addition, north elevation, view to southeast.

Photo #004 (MN_Brown County_New Ulm High School_0004)
1939 classroom addition, south elevation (rear), view east.

Photo #005 (MN_Brown County_New Ulm High School_0005)
1939 auditorium addition, east elevation, view to west.

Photo #006 (MN_Brown County_New Ulm High School_0006)
1956 addition, north elevation, view to southwest.

Photo #007 (MN_Brown County_New Ulm High School_0007)
1956 addition, south elevation, view to northeast.

Photo #008 (MN_Brown County_New Ulm High School_0008)
Overview, Block 106 N, view to northeast. Rear of 1939 auditorium on right.

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Photo #009 (MN_Brown County_New Ulm High School_0009)
1915 building, 2nd floor corridor, view to north.

Photo #010 (MN_Brown County_New Ulm High School_0010)
1915 building, old auditorium/ library, view to northwest.

Photo #011 (MN_Brown County_New Ulm High School_0011)
1915 building, 2nd floor classroom, view to west.

Photo #012 (MN_Brown County_New Ulm High School_0012)
1915 building, 3rd floor classroom, view to east.

Photo #013 (MN_Brown County_New Ulm High School_0013)
1939 classroom addition, 1st floor, entry and hall, view to northwest.

Photo #014 (MN_Brown County_New Ulm High School_0014)
1939 auditorium addition, WPA murals by John Socha, view to northeast.

Photo #015 (MN_Brown County_New Ulm High School_0015)
1939 auditorium addition, WPA murals by John Socha, view to southeast.

Photo #016 (MN_Brown County_New Ulm High School_0016)
1956 addition, 1st floor, kindergarten room, view to south. These rooms retain original cabinets and flooring.

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. 460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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National Park Service

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Figure 1: Location of school property. The streets are laid in a grid pattern, roughly north-south, but parallel to the Minnesota River, so slightly askew from true north. Local residents often use the term “New Ulm north.”

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National Park Service

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Figure 2: New Ulm High School, 1915. Note the Emerson School (1900) in the rear. This remained in use until it was razed in 1973. *Brown County Historical Society*

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Section number Additional Documentation Page 3

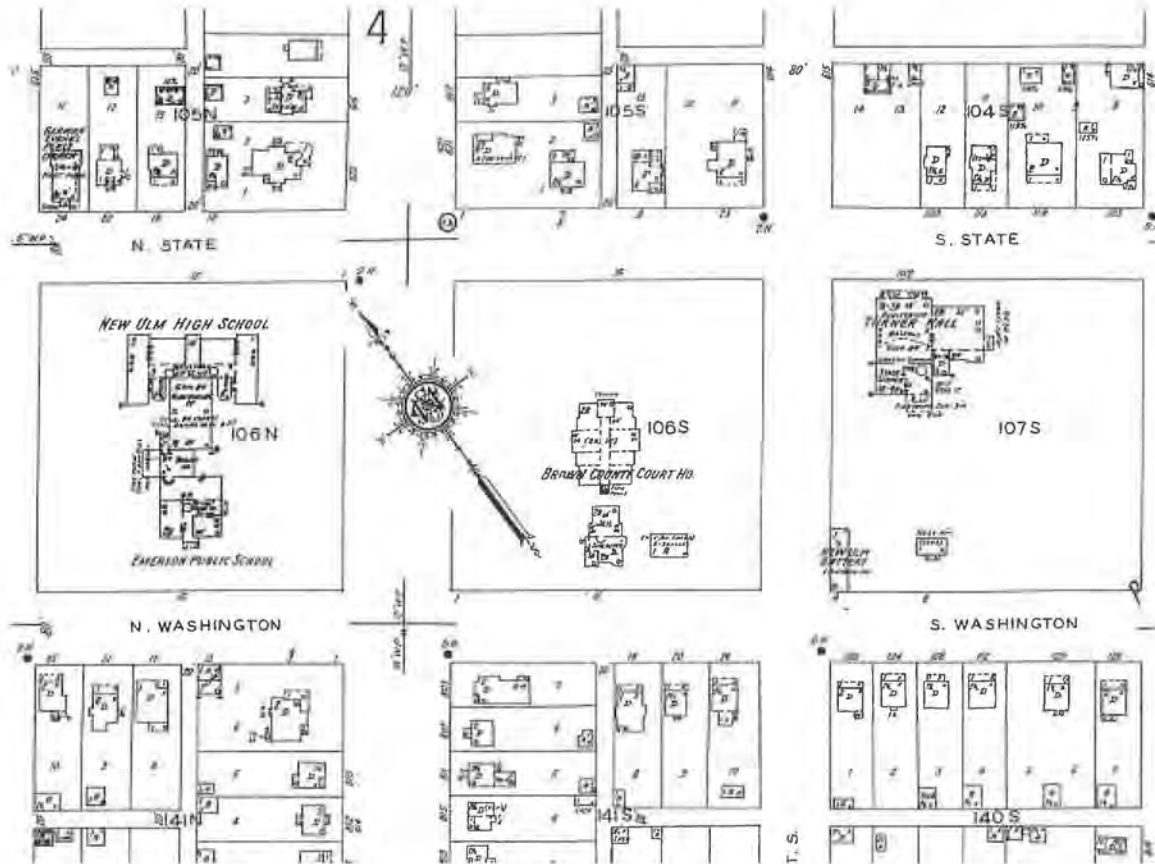


Figure 3: New Ulm High School, 1935 Sanborn Insurance Map. The map illustrates the three blocks that were a key part of the town plat: education, government, and Turner Hall. It also shows the original configuration of the 1915 New Ulm High School and its relationship to the Emerson School.

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Figure 4: New Ulm High School, Auditorium/ Gymnasium Addition, 1939
Brown County Historical Society

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Figure 5: WPA workers in front of auditorium addition, taken in 1938
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Figure 6: New Ulm High School, north classroom addition, taken in 1939.
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Figure 7: New Ulm High School, Auditorium/ Gymnasium, view to east, taken in 1939. This was taken before installation of the WPA murals. *Minnesota Historical Society*

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Figure 8: New Ulm High School, Library, taken in 1939. The room was originally used as an auditorium and changed for use as the library in 1939. *Minnesota Historical Society*

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Figure 9: New Ulm High School, classroom addition, Commercial Department, taken in 1939.
Minnesota Historical Society

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National Park Service

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Section number Additional Documentation Page 10

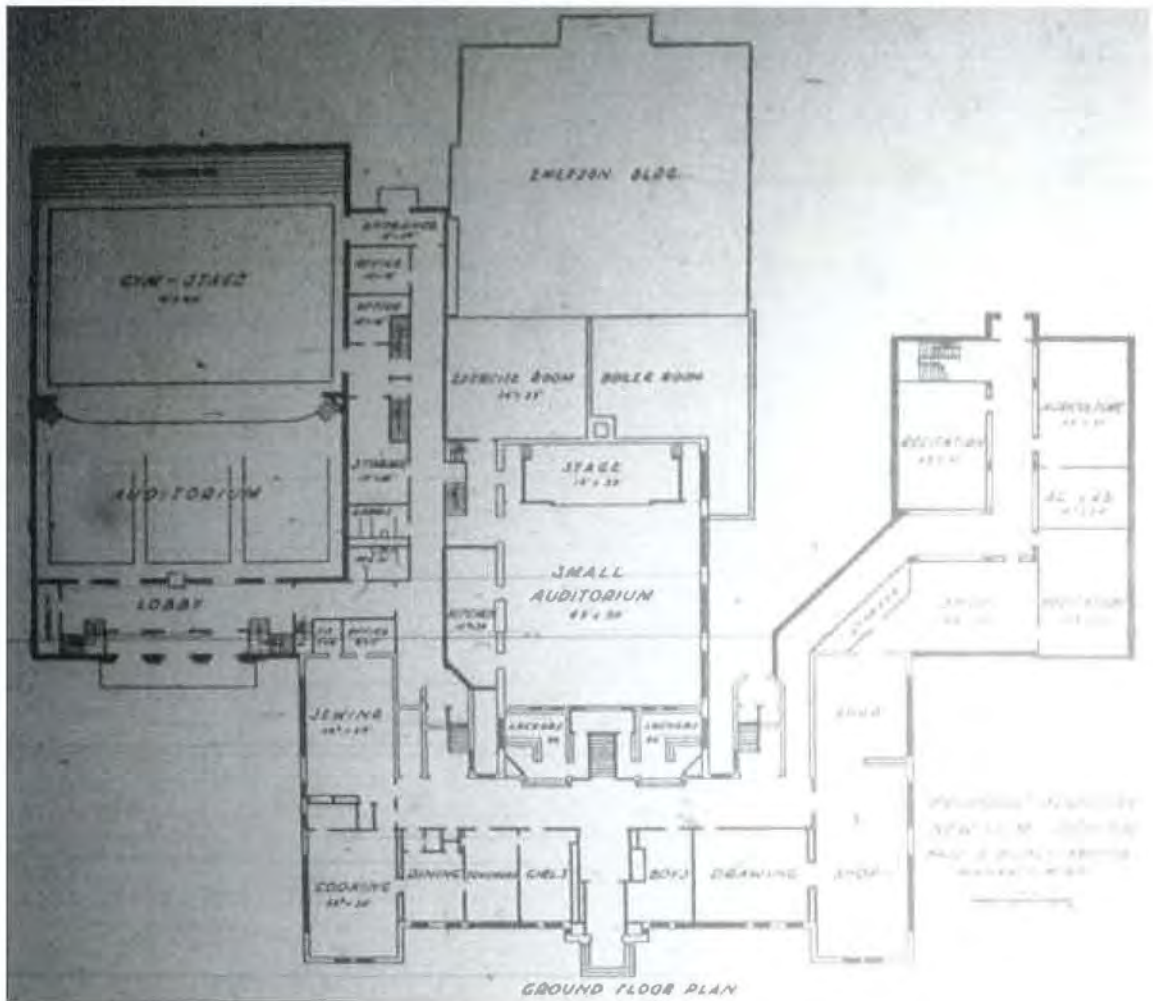


Figure 10: New Ulm High School, First Floor, 1939 (Ground floor in 1939 plans)

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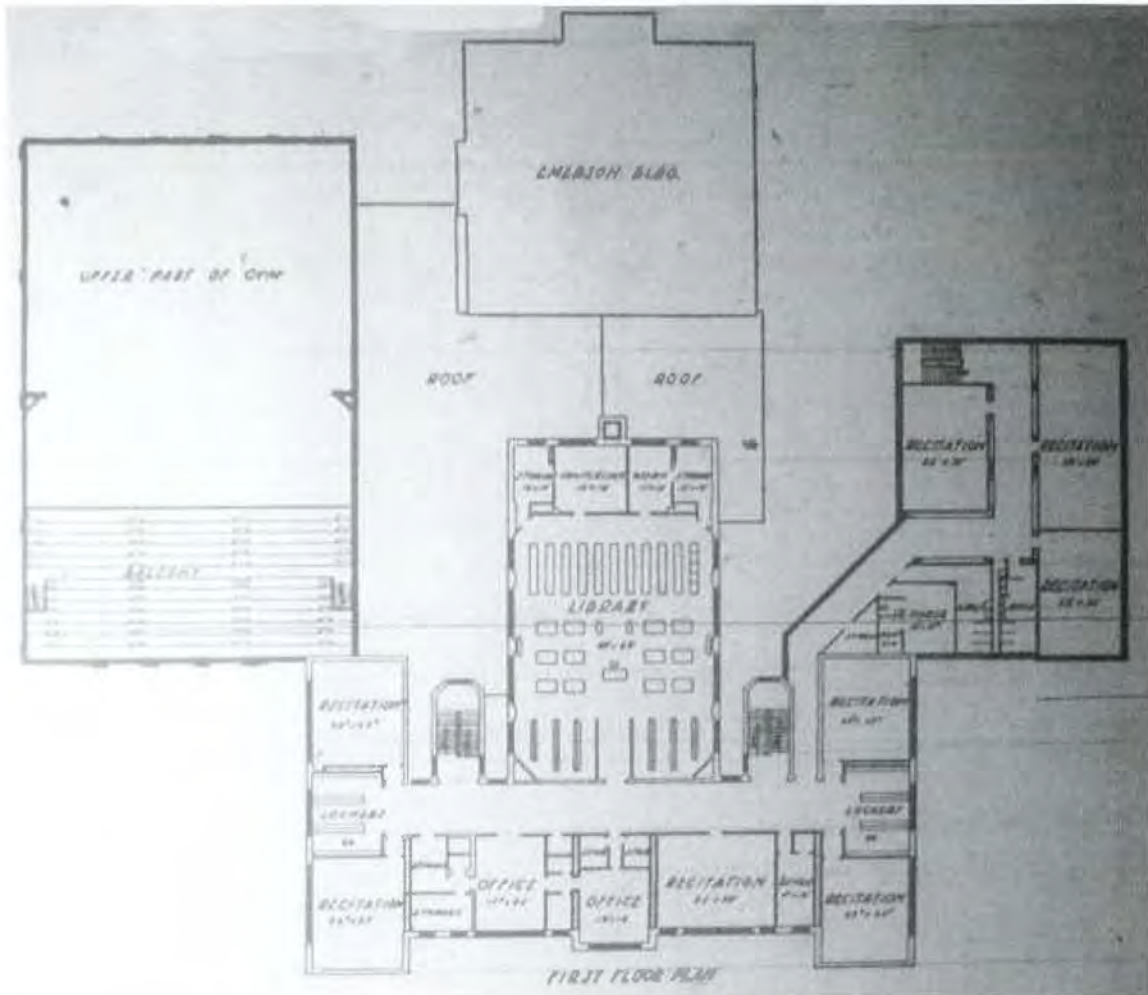


Figure 11: New Ulm High School, Second Floor, 1939 (First floor in 1939 plans)

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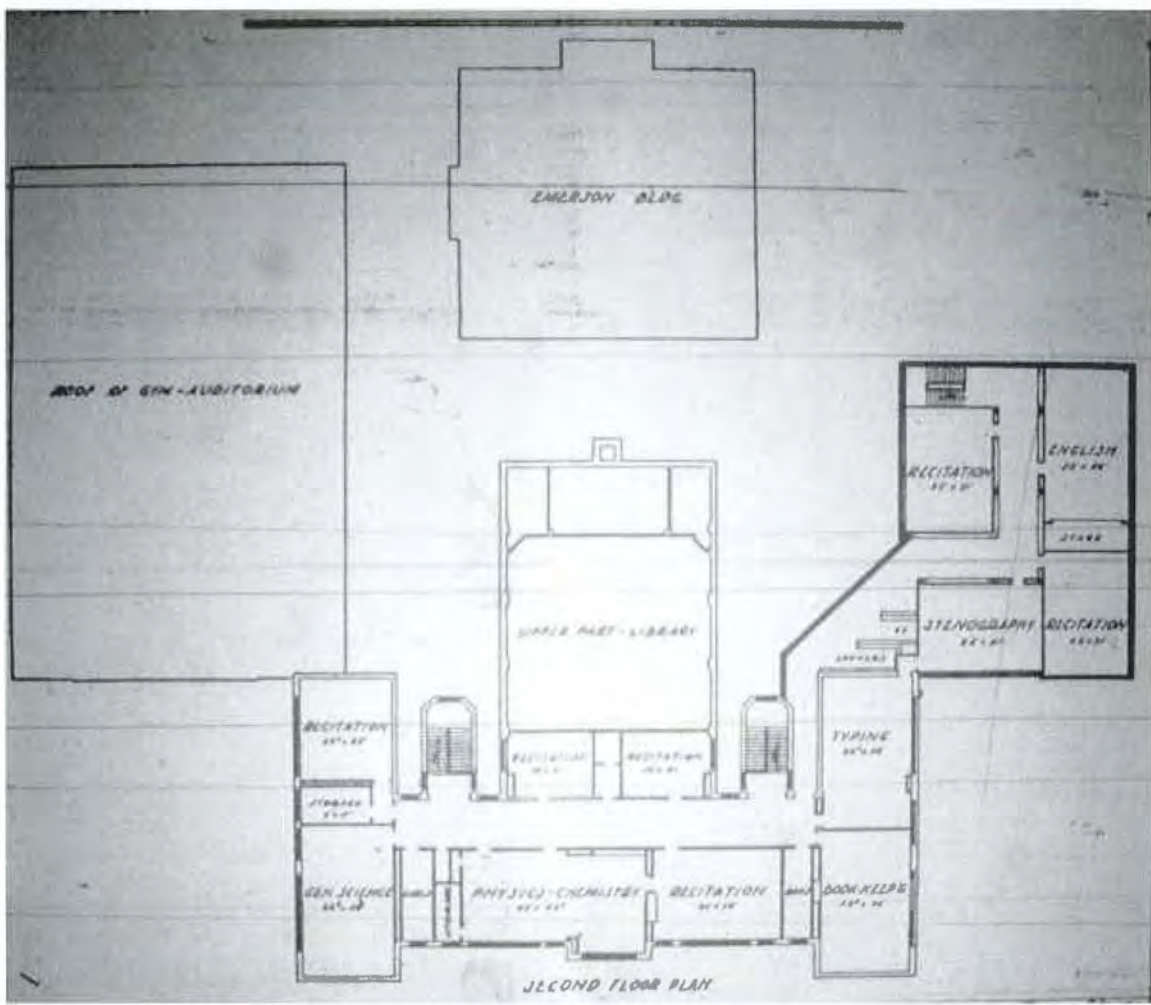


Figure 12: New Ulm High School, Third Floor, 1939 (Second floor in 1939 plans)

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Section number Additional Documentation Page 13

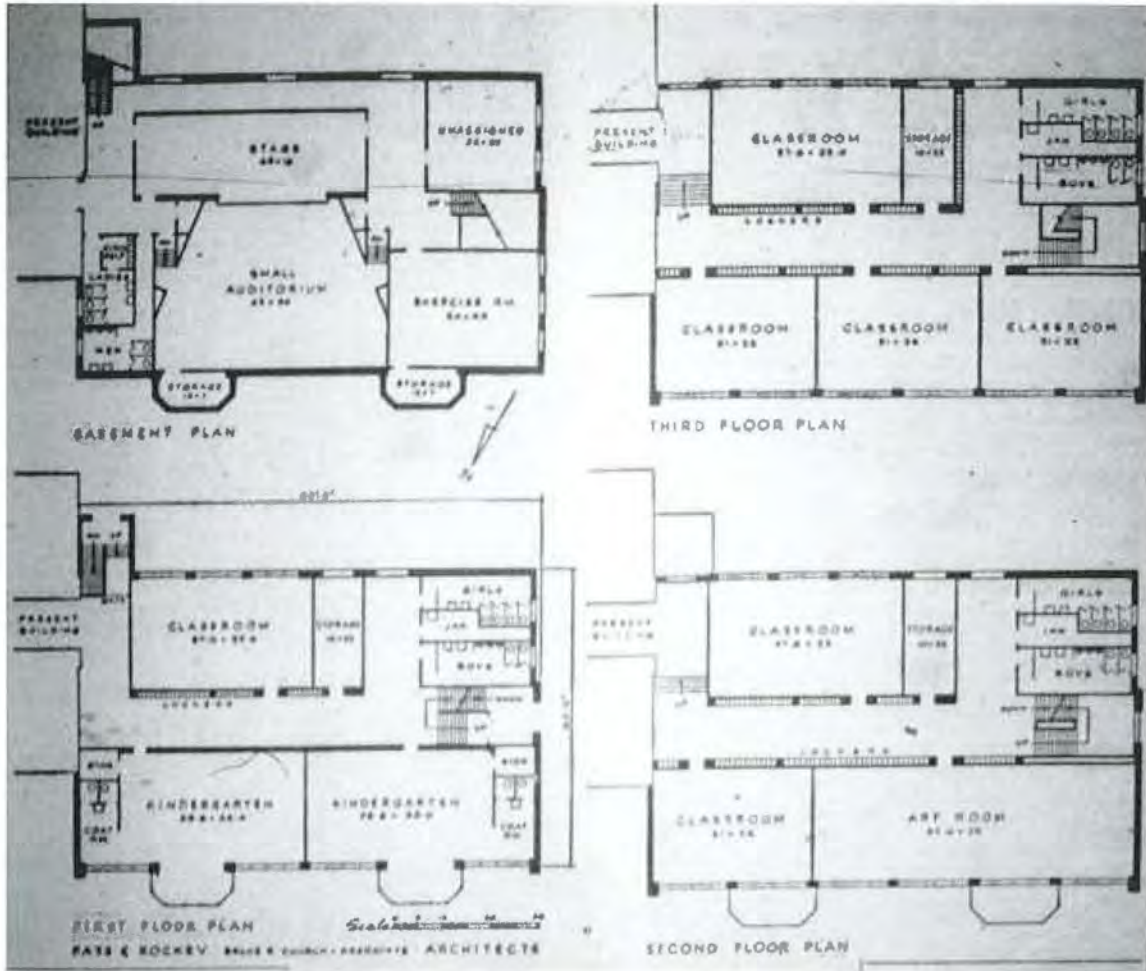


Figure 13: New Ulm High School, 1956 Addition.

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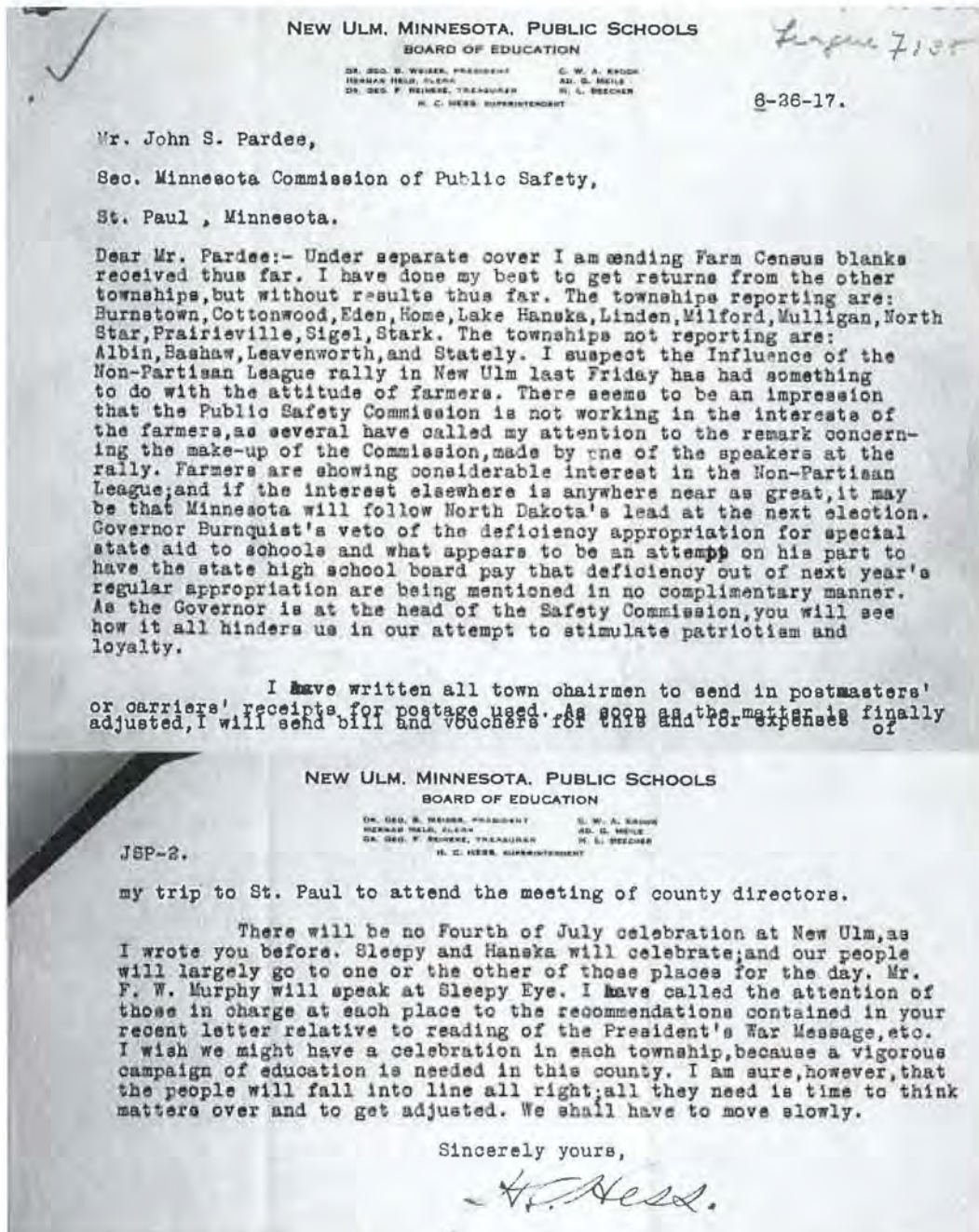


Figure 14: Letter from H. C. Hess, superintendent of public schools and county director of the Public Safety Commission, to John S. Pardee, secretary, Minnesota Commission of Public Safety, June 26, 1917. This is typical of the reports that Hess sent to the state commission, using school board stationery. Minnesota Commission of Public Safety, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minn.

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National Park Service

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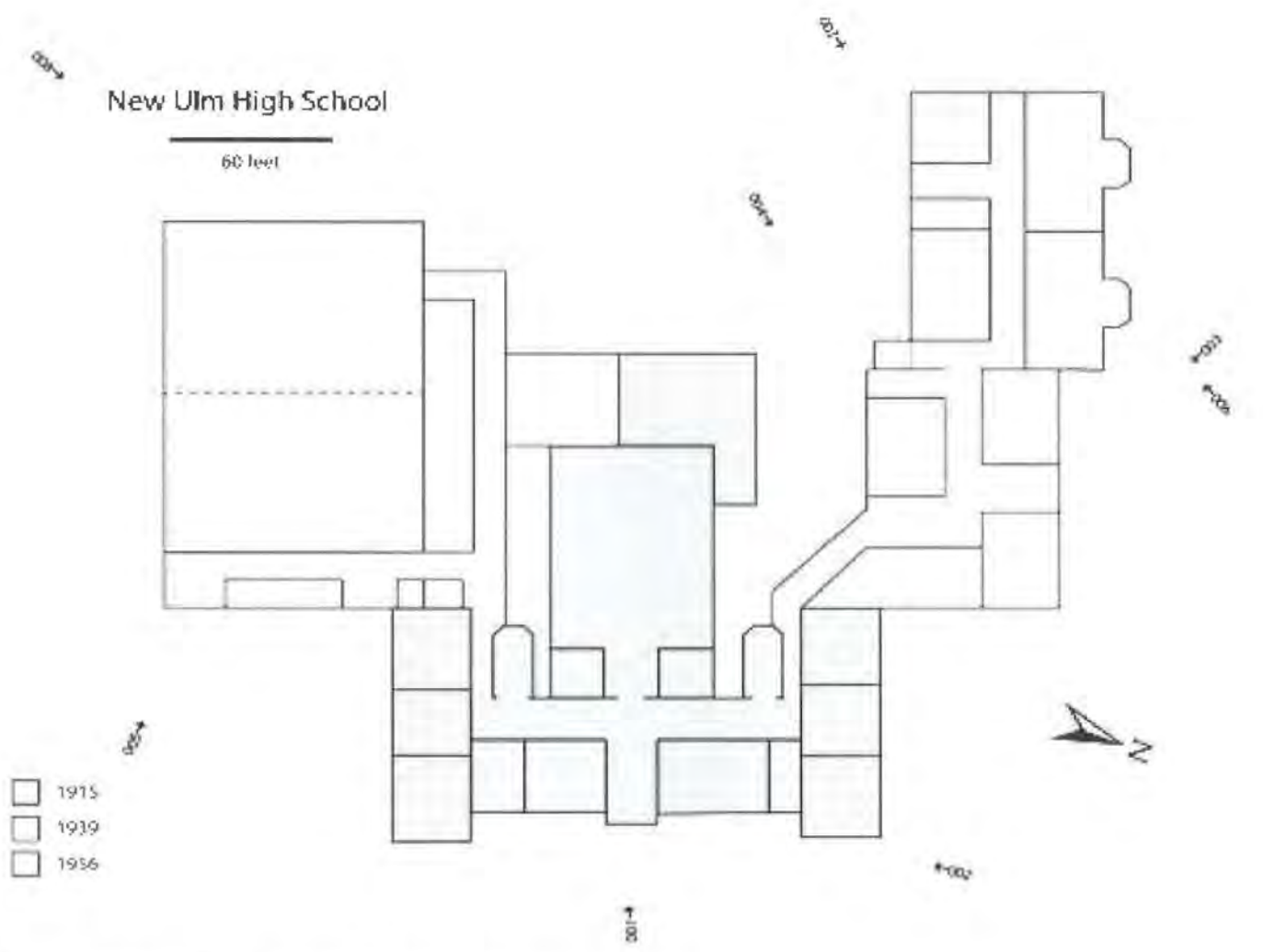


Figure 15: New Ulm High School, exterior photos.

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New Ulm High School
Interior Photo Key
(Not to scale)

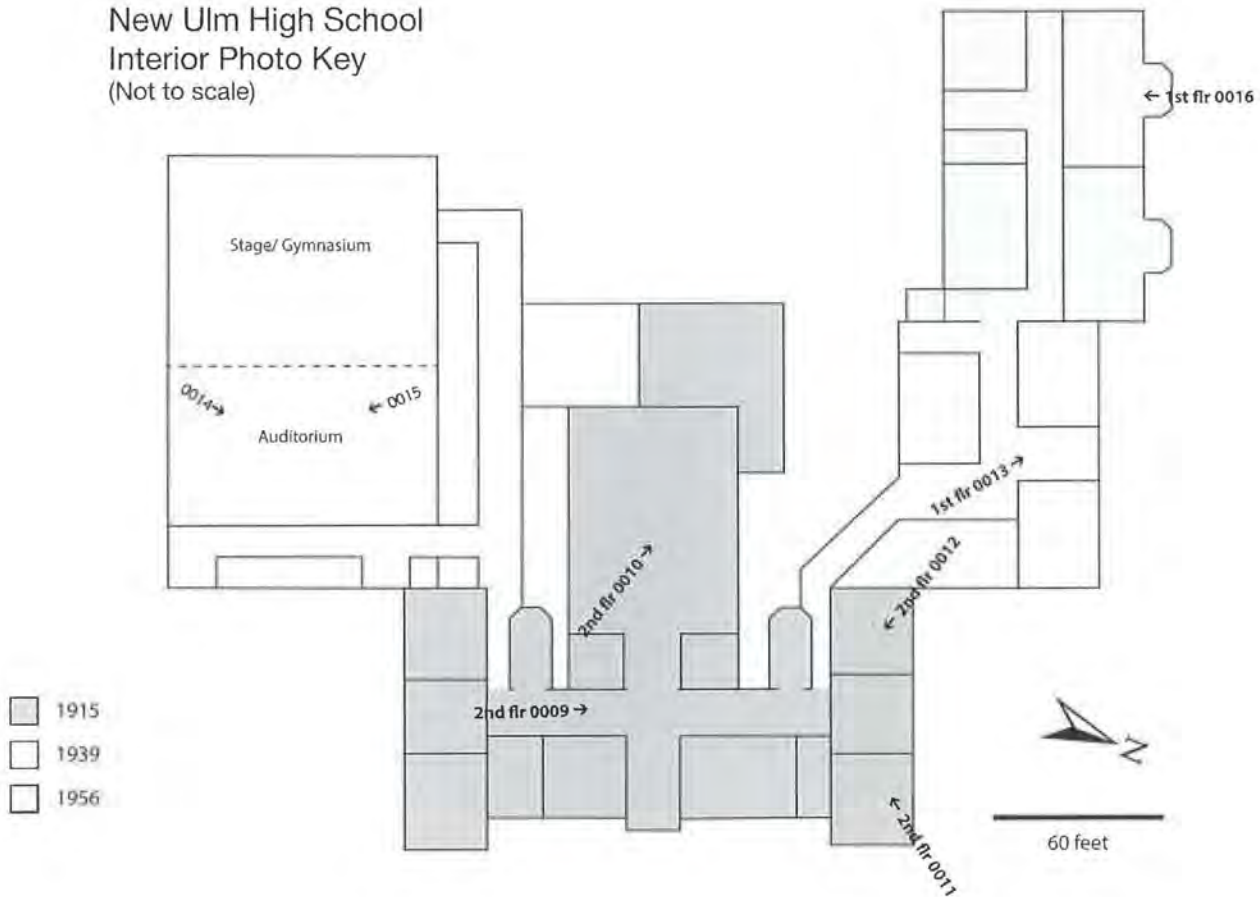


Figure 16: New Ulm High School, interior photos











NEW ULM MIDDLE SCHOOL

New Ulm Actors Community Theatre
www.newulmact.com







Center St



EXIT

FIRE

01





www.oneonline.org
www.careeronestop.org
www.mccollege.org





AGRICULTURE

WELCOME
TO
NEW ULM
MIDDLE
SCHOOL









UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY New Ulm High School
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MINNESOTA, Brown

DATE RECEIVED: 6/05/15 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 7/07/15
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 7/22/15 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 7/21/15
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000438

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 7.21.15 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

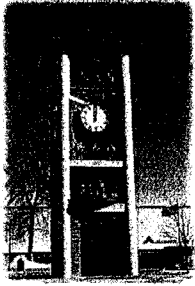
RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



City of New Ulm

100 North Broadway
New Ulm, Minnesota 56073
Telephone: (507) 359-8251



Office of the Mayor **Robert "Bob" Beussman**



4/21/15

Barbara Mitchell Howard
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
345 Kellogg Boulevard West
St. Paul, MN 55102-1906

Ms Howard:

Because our Heritage Preservation Commission does not include a member who has qualified to meet the Federal Standards, and I have not either, the city of New Ulm chooses not to comment on the nomination of **New Ulm High School, 1 North State Street, New Ulm, Brown County** through the CLG review process.

Sincerely,

Minnesota Historical Society
State Historic Preservation Office
345 Kellogg Blvd West, St. Paul, Minnesota 55102
651-259-3451

RECEIVED 2280

JUN - 5 2015

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

TO: Stephanie Toothman, Keeper
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Denis P. Gardner

DATE: May 27, 2015

NAME OF PROPERTY: New Ulm High School

COUNTY AND STATE: Brown County, Minnesota

SUBJECT: National Register:
 Nomination
 Multiple Property Documentation Form
 Request for determination of eligibility
 Request for removal (Reference No.)
 Nomination resubmission
 Boundary increase/decrease (Reference No.)
 Additional documentation (Reference No.)

DOCUMENTATION:

Original National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
 Multiple Property Documentation Form
 Continuation Sheets
 Removal Documentation
 Photographs
 CD w/ image files
 Original USGS Map
 Sketch map(s)
 Correspondence
 Owner Objection
The enclosed owner objections
Do Do not constitute a majority of property owners

STAFF COMMENTS:

Map is adapted from Google earth.