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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

OCT 20 1992

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Irving School

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 101 North 56th Avenue West not for publication

city or town Duluth vicinity

state Minnesota code MN county St. Louis code 137 zip code 55807

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 nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)


Signature of certifying official/Title

10/13/92
Date

Ian R. Stewart, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency and bureau Minnesota Historical Society

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

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

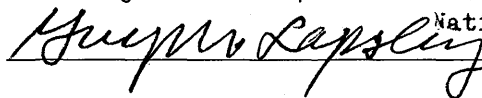
I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

entered in the

Date of Action



National Register

11/20/92

Irving School
Name of Property

St. Louis, Minnesota
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/school

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Renaissance

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Brick

Stone

roof Asphalt

other

Narrative Description

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

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.)

Property is:

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

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Education

Period of Significance

1894-1913

Significant Dates

1894, 1895, 1905

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Palmer, Hall, and Hunt

(Palmer, Emmet S.; Hall, Lucien P.; Hunt, William A.)

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Irving School
Name of Property

St. Louis, Minnesota
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 1.5 Acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	5
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5	1	7	5	9	0	0
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Zone Easting Northing

3

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Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rolf T. Anderson

organization N/A date July 12, 1992

street & number 212 West 36th Street telephone 612-824-7807

city or town Minneapolis state MN zip code 55407

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

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

Additional items

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

Property Owner

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

name Daniel King

street & number 128 West 1st Street telephone

city or town Duluth state MN zip code 55802

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

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

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Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1 Irving School, St. Louis County, MinnesotaDESCRIPTION

Irving School is located on Nicollet Street between 56th and 57th Avenues West in West Duluth. The building is immediately south of Interstate 35 and approximately four miles southwest of the downtown business district. The school is flanked by single family houses in a residential neighborhood which reflects the building's original setting, while commercial areas are located to the north of the freeway.

Irving School is a large, two story, T-shaped building resting on a raised basement with overall dimensions of 188 feet by 142 feet. The structure features load-bearing construction with walls built of brick and stone. Battered Lake Superior brownstone is utilized in the basement, while the upper floors are faced with cream colored pressed brick and bluff colored sandstone trim. The entire building is capped with a series of low-pitched, intersecting hip roofs covered with asphalt shingles. Irving School was erected between 1894 and 1895 and designed in the Renaissance Revival Style by the Duluth firm of Palmer, Hall and Hunt.

The south facing principal facade is organized into five symmetrical bays which include a central pavilion, two flanking wings, and two projecting end bays. Design features shared by the entire facade include the rusticated brownstone of the basement laid in a coursed ashlar pattern and rising to a height of eight feet; broad sandstone belt courses extending across the facade which separate the basement from the first story and the first floor from the second story and serve as both the sill and the lintel for the first story windows; a third belt course which also provides the sill for the second story window openings; and a cornice featuring an architrave with an egg and dart molding and a dentil course placed directly below the eaves. The brick work on the first floor is distinguished by recessed coursing to simulate stone masonry. Window openings feature one over one light double-hung sash.

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The central entrance pavilion is defined by a loggia with three semicircular, keystone arches, all executed with sandstone. Each center pier also supports a narrow, stylized pilaster column which rises from the impost. The words "Irving School" are placed above the arches in raised, stone lettering. Four, tall, round-arched windows flanked by a smaller window opening are found on the second story. These openings are linked by a raised stone band which defines the window hoods. Placed above each of the four arched openings is a bull's-eye window with a stone surround. This central portion of the entrance bay is flanked by two window openings located on each of the building's three levels. Stone banding decorates the second story windows and creates stylized voussoirs. Placed within the cornice high above each of the four windows is a small rectangular opening. The cornice treatment for this central bay includes a series of ornate brackets. The flanking wings feature five closely spaced window openings on all levels, while the projecting ends bays include three window openings. Flat segmental brick arches cap the second story window openings in the four outer bays.

Both the east and west facades are organized into three symmetrical bays. The central bay projects from the facade and includes an entrance with a semicircular, keystone arch. The entrance is flanked with single window opening while four windows are located above the entry on the second floor. This bay is capped by a pediment containing a semicircular window. Each flanking bay includes three window openings. Belt courses and detailing remain consistent with the principal facade.

The building also extends from the north facade to form the leg of the T-shaped plan. The north, east, and west facing facades of this wing all feature evenly spaced double-hung sash, although a continuous band of windows is located on both the first and second stories near the intersection of the T. A gabled dormer projects from both the east and west slopes of the hip roof. Each dormer contains paired window openings flanked by pilaster columns and is decorated with a cornice including a dentil course and bracketed eaves. Located to each side of the intersection of this wing and the main building are three, tall, stepped windows which mark the position of the interior stairways.

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The boiler house extends from the northwest corner of the building. It consists of a one story, flat roofed section with a small projection to the north which is covered by a hipped, metal roof with standing seams. A tall chimney is attached to the boiler house and includes design features similar to those employed in the school. The chimney consists of a rusticated stone base followed by a tapered brick shaft which corbels outward near its termination. A sandstone band is placed at the same level as the belt course separating the first and second stories of the school building.

The school's interior spaces are organized around two perpendicular hallways which reflect the building's T-shaped plan. Ten classrooms are located on both the first and second floors and a large assembly room is also located on the upper story. The second floor may be reached by two ornate cast iron stairways with a half-turn design with landings. The stairways include slate treads and risers with decorative rosettes, copper Newel posts, and grills with an elaborate foliated design. The central window in the west stairwell contains a stained glass window featuring a figure of a woman with the words, "The Lord is My Shepherd," and, "In Memory of Laura Kennedy," Irving School's first principal. Maple flooring and oak trim is employed in the interior.

A stone tablet located in the west end of the entrance loggia contains the names of the following individuals associated with the construction of the building:

Architects - Palmer, Hall and Hunt
General Contractors

Foundation - C.J. Fredrickson
Superstructure - Evens and Grandy
Heating - Thompson Waugh Co.
Ventilation Engineer - E.G. Barratt C.E.

A corresponding tablet in the east end contains the names of the members of the Board of Education.

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The cost of the "New Irving School" was itemized in the Twenty-Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Education dated July 31, 1895 as follows:

Permanent Improvement	\$ 4,423.50
Evens & Grandy	47,658.95
Thompson, Waugh & Co	11,365.19
Thomson & Dunlop	1,415.55
E.G. Barratt	473.25
Janitors	130.00
Fuel	432.80
C.J. Fredrickson	3,849.72
Iowa Warming & Ventilating Co	419.33
Palmer, Hall & Hunt	950.00
Furniture	61.96
Total	\$71,180.25

The following additional costs were listed in the Annual Report dated July 31, 1896:

Permanent Improvement	\$5,155.20
Furniture	3,964.01
Evens & Grandy	11,071.05
Thompson, Waugh & Co.	1,399.39
Palmer, Hall & Hunt	251.52
Total	\$21,841.17

The building represents an example of the Renaissance Revival Style with features such as the balance and symmetry of the overall design; a projecting central pavilion; arched entrances; a rusticated stone base; the tri-part, horizontal division of the facades; window openings linked by stringcourses; and classical detailing and cornice treatment.

Irving School remains in nearly original condition with only minor changes occurring to the structure such as the infill of the arched entrances with paired doorways, the removal of several exterior steps which led to the building's three entrances and their incorporation in the interior, and the removal of the oak wainscot, none of which impacts the overall integrity of the building.

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The building operated as a school from 1895 to 1982 when the facility was closed and sold due to declining enrollment and as part of the district's consolidation program. Irving School has been used for housing since that time.

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SIGNIFICANCE

Irving School is architecturally significant under National Register Criterion C as an intact and well-preserved example of a 19th century school building. The building represents a well-designed and finely-executed work by the notable firm of Palmer, Hall and Hunt which is credited with the design of the finest schools in Duluth.¹ Irving School is also significant within the context of the firm's design development in that it clearly served as the prototype for one of the firm's best known works, Old Main, a National Register property at the University of Minnesota, Duluth campus, and it also represents an early example of the Renaissance Revival Style. The building is historically significant under National Register Criterion A under the context of education for its association with the dramatic expansion of the Duluth school system in the 1890s and for its ability to represent emerging trends in both the design and philosophical operation of school facilities. Irving School was the first ward school in Duluth to include an assembly hall, a innovation which was to influence subsequent school design in the district and from 1905 to 1913 the school was instrumental in developing a new philosophy of education called "education for living" which stressed vocational training in addition to traditional academic subjects. The building is associated with statewide historic contexts defined as Railroads and Agricultural Development (1870-1940), Northern Minnesota Lumbering (1870-1930s), and Minnesota's Iron Industry 1880s-1945).

Plans for the construction of Irving School were discussed in an Annual Report for 1893 which stated:

On April 1, 1893, a special committee.....was appointed to investigate the school requirements of the city, and reported that a twenty-room school building in West Duluth (Irving School), a twenty-room building at some point west of Garfield Avenue, and buildings of suitable

¹James Allen Scott, Duluth's Legacy Volume I Architecture (Duluth, The City of Duluth, 1974), p. 10.

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size for Duluth Heights and Ironton, were all urgently needed.

On April 24, competitive plans for a twenty-room building at West Duluth.....(by) Palmer, Hall & Hunt were.....accepted.

Lot 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, block 24, and lots 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15 and 16, Block 25, First Division, West Duluth, were purchased for the site of the twenty-room building in West Duluth (said lots adjoining the Irving School site) at a cost of \$19,125. Lots 13 and 14, Block 25, are now under contract, and when acquired the site for the twenty-room building will be 225 x 266 in size.²

There was already an existing Irving School adjacent to the site for the new building and the report further commented that, "This school has a very large enrollment for its size and the proposed building can be put up none too soon."³ In fact, the school was so inadequate that space for three classrooms was rented from nearby businesses on Central Avenue. The Duluth News Tribune of March 28, 1894 also discussed the construction of the Irving School as well as the Bryant School, indicating that "Names of American Men of Letters (were) Given to the Structures."⁴ Construction began in 1894 and was completed in 1895 with classes first held in the building on September 3, 1895. The inclusion of an auditorium/gymnasium on the second floor was a particular design feature which received considerable attention from the Board of Education who reported that:

²Duluth Board of Education of the City of Duluth, Minnesota, Annual Report (July, 31, 1893), pp. 12-13.

³The existing school was apparently located on lots 14 and 15 of block 24 since their purchase is not mentioned, and all subsequent references to the legal description of the parcel refer to lots 8-16 on both blocks 24 and 25 of the First Division of West Duluth. It is known that the existing 8-room, frame building was relocated to the rear of the site to facilitate construction and that it was later demolished in June 1895 with the salvaged materials used in the construction of the annex to the Madison School and for repairs at other buildings.

⁴Irving School was named for Washington Irving, and his birthday was designated as one of the school district's flag days. Duluth's schools were typically named for political or literary figures, i.e.: Adams, Madison, Jefferson, Washington, Longfellow, etc., or for their location, i.e.: Park Point, Glen Avon, Oneota, Lester Park, Central, etc.

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This structure is altogether the most complete ward school building in the district. The hall in the second story is a most useful addition and will enable the building at some future time with scarcely any change to be used as a branch high school. The addition of a hall, while in some respects an innovation, will demonstrate the importance of such addition(s) to all large school buildings, to be erected in the future, as it will furnish accommodation for general exercises. At present these exercises are largely given in the corridors of school buildings, where the seating is by no means satisfactory and the programme rendered in commemoration of holidays cannot be so conveniently presented.⁵

Subsequent comments were made about the auditorium in the Annual Report from 1896.

During the year the new Bryant and Irving schools were opened. These structures may be considered the best among the many now owned by the District. One feature in the Irving building deserves especial notice, namely, the hall. This is the only ward school having an assembly hall. The advantages of such a room cannot be commented upon too strongly, as it furnishes an opportunity to gather the children together as desired for general exercises, where each child gets inspiration from the others, and is made to feel more fully the school spirit. In the future, it would be wise to erect no building of eight or more rooms, without providing a suitable assembly hall."⁶

School attendance averaged approximately 450 students in 1895-96, accommodating about 100 more students than the old Irving School. Attendance continued to grow throughout the decade when by 1900

⁵Board of Education of the City of Duluth, Minnesota, Twenty-Fifth Annual Report (July, 31, 1895), p. 44.

⁶Board of Education of the City of Duluth, Minnesota, Annual Report (July, 31, 1896), p. 38.

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the attendance averaged 698 students. This number placed Irving third in size among Duluth's schools, of which there were approximately 30 during this period. Only Washington and Jefferson schools had larger student populations. The total average attendance of the entire district ranged from 7,376 in 1896-7 to 8,135 in 1900-01.

Irving served as an elementary school from 1894-1905 with Laura Kennedy as principal. From 1905-13, a new philosophy of education was introduced which was called "education for living", resulting in the creation of the Irving Industrial High School, which existed in addition to the elementary school. This philosophy stressed vocational training as well as the more traditional academic subjects. Students graduated in manual training, commercial (business) studies, and domestic science under the direction of Principal Scott A. Foster. Courses included algebra, English, Latin, math, history, German, geometry, mechanical drawing, manual training, domestic science, and commercial classes. The size of the graduating classes ranged from 8 to 25 students.

The establishment of this specialized program is indicative of the progress in the field of education since the 1880s in both Duluth and throughout the state. In spite of Minnesota's permanent school fund and rather progressive legislation in support of education, there was only a gradual recognition of the public obligation and importance of education beyond the elementary level. Even by the late 1800s, there were still very few high school graduates, and school facilities were often inadequate. In 1877 there were only 117 high school graduates in the entire state⁷. In Duluth, 10 students graduated between 1879 and 1883. The 1883 Annual Report of the Duluth Board of Education refers to school buildings with problems with the cold, poor light, and poor ventilation. A school library was also needed. The Washington High School received favorable comment because of a "basement apartment fitted up with basins, towels, soap, water, etc." Many students were in school for only half days, apparently because of overcrowding, which was viewed as a problem because many of these

⁷Theodore C. Blegen, Minnesota, A History of the State (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1963), p. 411.

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pupils were "eleven and twelve years old....whose school life in general will not extend much farther, and who, more than any other class, need full day's instruction."⁸ Courses of study included reading, writing, technical grammar, natural science, history, geography, and other traditional subjects.

The Endion School of 1890 is typical of the more substantial facilities which Duluth began to construct. And while the Romanesque building may have offered a considerable improvement from earlier schools, a review of the floor plans reveals an interior devoted solely to classroom space; there was apparently no provision for a gymnasium or auditorium, and playground space was probably lacking as well. However, the construction of Central High in 1890-2 clearly marks Duluth's commitment to education and the desire to provide a high school education to a large portion of the population. The immense building was constructed at a cost of \$500,000 and included remarkably complete facilities for the day. It was said in conjunction with this building that, "Duluth had courage to outstrip the rest of the country in its educational institutions." The school included a large auditorium, a well-equipped gymnasium, a library, laboratories, space for vocational training, a museum, drafting room, a room for taxidermy, and even a dark room. Yet, the concept of a high school education was still a new one; there were 40 graduates in 1895, 56 in 1896, and 61 in 1897. When Irving School was built in 1894 with the first assembly room in a ward school, it was a sign that even elementary schools would be the beneficiaries of the philosophy which led to improved educational facilities as standards continued to rise and new ideas surfaced about the value of education. State normal schools began to train teachers for high schools and far-reaching changes occurred in the high school curriculum.

As the high schools developed - even by 1905 there were no fewer than 174 state-aided high schools, with some 20,000 students enrolled - the curriculum expanded to include vocational training, agriculture, art, physical

⁸Board of Education of Duluth, Minnesota, Annual Report (1883), p. 16.

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education, home economics, business, and other subjects close to the realities of practical living.⁹

The concept of vocational training, which was later called "education for living" when it was implemented in the Irving Industrial High School in 1905, was described in considerable detail in the school board's 1897 Annual Report which mentions Irving School as a possible location for the program. The benefits of the program were reviewed, even at an elementary level, and models in other cities, such as Minneapolis, and other states, such as Massachusetts, were discussed.¹⁰ Innovative programs of this type were not uncommon in progressive school districts of the period. From 1900-1930 the Minneapolis schools introduced several new curricula which attempted to meet societal needs with progressive programs, some of which were directed toward specific issues, such as immigrant needs. Manual training was added in 1900, an open air school for children with TB began in 1911, and free industrial training was provided in 1914. An interest developed in health, vocational, commercial, and physical education.¹¹ Other innovative programs occurred in Duluth as well. As early as even 1895 the Board of Education discussed the possibility of establishing an "ungraded school" for students who were not prepared to enter a particular grade. Irving School was suggested as a location for this program although it is not known whether it was ever implemented. In 1915 Duluth's first open air school opened in a building (no longer extant) constructed on the northwest corner of the Irving School site. The program was not intended for tubercular children, rather for those who were not as strong as the average. Special meals and clothing were provided.¹²

⁹Blegen, p. 412.

¹⁰Board of Education of the City of Duluth, Annual Report (July 31, 1897), pp.95-121.

¹¹Jacqueline Sluss (Thomas R. Zahn and Associates), "Preservation Plan for the City of Minneapolis" (A study for the City of Minneapolis by the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission and the State Historic Preservation Office, 1991.)

¹²"Duluth's First Open Air School is Ready to Receive Pupils," The Duluth Herald, 26 October 1915, p. 3.

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In 1914 the Irving Industrial High School moved to the first Denfeld School, which was later known as the West Junior High.¹³ Beginning in 1914 a junior high school for girls opened at Irving and remained until about 1926.¹⁴ From 1926 to 1982 the building continued to serve as an elementary school until it closed.

The construction of the Irving School was a result of the dramatic expansion in the Duluth school system at the end of the nineteenth century. Remarkably, the first school in the Duluth was said to have been built in 1856-7 in Oneota, although a school had been opened as early as 1834 at the Indian mission at nearby Fond du Lac. By 1883 the district owned five buildings and rented a sixth. These included the Washington School, buildings on First Avenue, East Third Street, Rice's Point, and the basement of the Presbyterian Church. The total average attendance approached 700, although total enrollment was listed as 1,182. However, this represented "an increase of 40.5 per cent upon that of the preceding year, a valuable indication of the growth of Duluth.....This number is far from the true school population. The younger children.....are hardly represented; and there are large numbers running the streets who should be brought into school."¹⁵ In 1893 there were 29 buildings and 6,398 students enrolled, although the actual average attendance was somewhat lower. The building operations report for the period from August 1, 1894 to July 1, 1895 reported that:

During the last year building improvements have been carried on to a greater extent than ever before in the history of this Board. Work has continued on the 20-room Irving building, the 16-room Bryant building, the 7-room annex to the Adams school, an 8-room addition to the Jackson and a 4-room addition to the Madison, besides numerous repairs and improvements on many other buildings. These buildings are all approaching completion and it is hoped they will all be ready for

¹³"Irving Elementary School, 1894-1982, History," (An undated history of Irving School found in the files of the Duluth Board of Education, Central High School.)

¹⁴During the Depression Era the Works Progress Administration operated a nursery school at Irving.

¹⁵Board of Education of Duluth, Minnesota, Annual Report (1883), pp. 16-17.

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occupancy by September next. The four-room brick building at Duluth Heights, known as the Lowell school, was also completed during the year.¹⁶

By 1897 attendance averaged over 7,000 and the district operated 31 buildings. However, the building count alone is somewhat misleading because small frame buildings, like the first Irving School, would be demolished and a substantial structure built to replace it. By 1919-20 enrollment was 17,924 and school property included one stone building (Central High School), 36 brick buildings, and four frame structures.¹⁷

The expansion of the school system was naturally linked to rapid growth of the city of Duluth. Yet, as late as 1850 the area which we now know as Duluth was still an isolated wilderness. Fur traders, explorers, and missionaries had frequented the area since the 17th century but it was not until George Stuntz established a cabin and primitive trading post on Minnesota Point in 1853 that settlement is considered to have begun. Once the North Shore of Lake Superior was opened to settlement by the Chippewa Treaty of LaPointe in 1855, a number of settlers arrived who had heard rumors of rich copper deposits and anticipated the inevitable growth that would occur. But the panic of 1857, generated by bank failures in the east, brought an end to this initial cycle growth. By 1858 Duluth was practically a ghost town.

Growth was again stimulated in the 1860s with the coming of the railroads. The Lake Superior and Mississippi Railroad was originally chartered in 1857, and incorporated by the Minnesota legislature in 1861, in order to link St. Paul and the harbor at Duluth. Construction of the railroad began in 1867 and reached the Head of the Lakes in August 1870. At the end of the new railroad, at the base of Minnesota Point, the 1870 census counted 3,100 inhabitants where only 14 families had lived a year

¹⁶Board of Education of the City of Duluth, Minnesota, Twenty-Fifth Annual Report (July 31, 1895), p. 33.

¹⁷Walter Van Brunt. Duluth and St. Louis County, Minn (American Historical Society, 1921). p. 337.

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earlier.¹⁸ The panic of 1873 caused the population of Duluth to plummet from 5,000 to 1,300 in less than a year. However, the city quickly recovered as thousands of settlers were moving out onto the Great Plains, one of the last frontiers to be settled and opened for farming. While mechanized equipment enabled agriculture to take place on a large scale, the need for lumber and a place from which to ship grain crops to eastern markets remained. Duluth's role in providing solutions to these problems lead to period of unprecedented growth and development in the 1880s and 1890s.

The need for lumber to build houses on the prairie, the railroad's demand for timber for ties and trestles, and the growth of large urban centers such as St. Paul, Minneapolis, St. Louis, and Duluth itself all combined to make logging and sawmilling chief economic activities. The first saw mills had been constructed in the harbor in the 1850s to serve primarily local needs. Once the railroad was completed in 1870 there was a renewed need for local lumber and during the next decade large shipments of lumber from the harbor began in earnest. The first markets were to the west in the Red River Valley and northern Dakota Territory, yet the greatest period in lumbering began in 1890 with the arrival of large suppliers for the eastern lumber market who had by this time exhausted the great pine forests of Michigan. For the next quarter century the Duluth harbor would serve as the hub of the lumbering activity in the Northwest, each year shipping millions of board feet of lumber eastward, much of it cut at the harbor's own dozen and a half saw mills.¹⁹ The Duluth mills had the advantage of being close to the large supplies of pine and having the economy of Lake Superior for transport. Duluth helped make Minnesota the world's largest producer of white pine lumber between 1890 and 1905. In 1882 nearly all of Duluth's production of 82,000,000 feet went into the Twin Cities market. This was one third of the total amount produced in Minnesota that season. Peak production years were reached in the late 1880s and early 1890s.

¹⁸John R. Borchert. America's Northern Heartland - An Economic and Historical Geography of the Upper Midwest (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 37.

¹⁹St. Louis County Historical Society, "Duluth Historic Resources Survey Final Report" (Duluth: St. Louis County Historical Society, 1984), p. 108.

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In 1902, the peak year, the Duluth district produced 1,031,775,000 feet of white pine lumber, a record never equalled.

Duluth's position on Lake Superior as the railhead of the first transcontinental railway also made Duluth a natural location from which to ship grain. The first grain depot, Elevator A, was built on Lake Superior near Minnesota Point in 1870. In 1877 Duluth received and shipped 460,595 bushels of wheat; in 1886 the total was 22,425,730.²⁰ Once the Duluth Ship Canal opened up the sheltered harbor basin, new elevators were constructed along the east side of Rice's Point, on what became known as "elevator row". The "matchless hard wheat of Western Minnesota and Northern Dakota" began arriving at the Duluth harbor for transshipment down the lakes to Buffalo in 1878, and as fast as the railroad penetrated the prairie on into Montana, settlers appeared to farm the land and its staple product came in return to the harbor. Since the turn of the century the Duluth harbor has been the U.S. grain shipping capital of the Great Lakes.

In spite of the importance of grain and lumber, almost as soon as the Merritt brothers brought the first train load of Mesabi ore to the harbor in 1892, iron ore became the chief bulk cargo item shipped from the Head of the Lakes. By the turn of the century Minnesota had become the nation's leading ore producer and the economic fortunes of the Duluth harbor became closely linked to the outward flow of hematite to the lower lake steel mills. Throughout the heyday of iron ore shipments, the harbor would rank second only to New York in total tonnage handled. At the same time the heavy one-way ore traffic promoted economical shipments of coal and other cargoes in the same freighters on their return voyages.

Between 1880 and 1890 Duluth's population rose from 3,000 to 33,000. By 1890 the city was the 5th largest seaport in the U.S. and by 1892 the population had risen to 50,000. Duluth was booming. A surge of Eastern capital had been pumped into the building of warehouses, grain elevators, sawmills, foundries, and business blocks. The notion was that something like another Chicago would grow at this new transcontinental transshipment

²⁰van Brunt, p. 248.

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point in the heart of the continent.²¹ Understandably, the school system grew accordingly.

Irving School was designed by the firm of Palmer, Hall and Hunt, which was responsible for several of Duluth's most significant structures.²² The firm was established by Emmet S. Palmer whose name first appeared in the Duluth City Directory in 1886. He was listed as a carpenter, which was typical of the men who built Duluth in the 1870s and 1880s in that they had little or no professional training. In 1887 there were only two architectural firms in the city, McMillen and Stebbins, and Wirth and Traphagen, by 1891 there were at least 13 architects or architectural partnerships. Lucien P. Hall formed a partnership with Emmet Palmer in 1887, calling themselves "Architects and Superintendents." William Alan Hunt joined the firm as a draftsman in 1889 after studying for four years with Charles Cropsey, a prominent architect from Cincinnati, Ohio. In 1893 Hunt was made a full partner and the firm officially became known as Palmer, Hall and Hunt. Hall left the firm in about 1903 and Palmer left for Seattle in 1905. Hunt continued to practice in Duluth until 1917 when he moved to Hibbing to become the Supervising Architect for the Oliver Mining Company. He lived at the Androy Hotel and was said to have directed the rebuilding of Hibbing when the town moved to the south to make way for the expansion of the Hull-Rust-Mahoning Mine.²³

One of the first known works by the firm was the Lincoln School (now razed), built between 1888-89 at 24th Avenue West and 5th Street. The building was designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque Style and featured a cruciform plan with a rusticated stone base, a tall tower, an arched entrance supported by low columns, and second story windows capped with round arches.²⁴ This design was followed by a building in the same style which would become the firm's best known work; Central High School, a magnificent example

²¹Borchert, p. 44.

²²Lawrence J. Sommer, "Landmark Structures of Duluth Their History and Architecture" (Master's Thesis, University of Minnesota, 1971), P. 140.

²³Duluth News Tribune, 17 August 1930.

²⁴Several large additions have been added to the site and now it appears that only a very small portion of the original building still exists. This surviving fragment does not retain architectural integrity.

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of the Richardsonian Romanesque designed and built between 1890-92. The immense building with a tower 230 feet tall and extensive sculpture appears to be based on Richardson's design for the Allegheny County Courthouse in Pittsburgh constructed between 1884-87. Within a span of 10 years Duluth's architects provided the city with a significant number of designs in the Richardsonian Romanesque which are still evident today. In addition to the two designs by Palmer, Hall and Hunt mentioned above, these include the Endion School designed in 1890 by Adolf F. Rudolph, the First Presbyterian Church of 1891, and the Board of Trade Building constructed from 1894-95, both by the firm of Traphagen and Fitzpatrick. Yet, as a result of the premature death of Richardson and other factors such as the impact of the Columbian Exposition of 1893, the popularity of the style began to wane and the trend turned to the Classical Revival Styles and the Beaux Arts.

One of Palmer, Hall and Hunt's first designs following Central High School reflects this stylistic change. The Longfellow School (now razed) built in 1891-92 still retains certain features of the Richardsonian Romanesque such as the tall tower and arched openings, but the heaviness of the design has been lessened and features such as the horizontal divisions of the facade and the pedimented gables suggest the firm's shift toward the Renaissance Revival Style. The Jefferson School of 1893 by McMillen and Radcliff bears a very close resemblance to the Longfellow School, although the tower has been eliminated, and it is possible that Palmer, Hall and Hunt's design may have influenced the later building. In 1892 Palmer, Hall and Hunt designed the Glen Avon School (now razed), a smaller-scale, two-story frame structure with corner pilasters and classical detailing. 1894 brought the design of Irving School, which appears to represent the firm's first complete design in the Renaissance Revival Style. The Bryant School (now razed), by McMillen and Tenbusch and built at the same time, also reflects this style. Palmer, Hall and Hunt may have been responsible for the design of the Jackson and Lester Park Schools, both of which have been razed.

The firm's educational architecture culminated in 1898 with the design of the State Normal School (Old Main). The building is remarkably similar to the Irving School with its central pavilion

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and flanking wings, tri-part loggia entrance with arched openings, bulls-eye windows, and low pitched hip roof. It represents a refined, and elegant interpretation of the Beaux Arts Style with its Doric and Corinthian pilasters, balustrade, corner quoins, eave brackets, and articulated frieze. The National Register building is one of four within an historic district and it remains the only surviving pre-1900 main building at a state normal school campus.²⁵ In 1909 and 1915 the east and west wings were added to the building by William Hunt, which actually increased the building's similarity to the Irving School. (See Appendix for illustrations of Duluth's school buildings.)

Commercial architecture of the period also reflected the Beaux Arts and Renaissance Revival Styles. In 1895 Palmer, Hall and Hunt designed the Lonsdale Building, an eight-story, Beaux Arts design with a highly ornamented top story. The building represents one of the few surviving nineteenth century high rise business blocks. Other designs include the Civic Center, part of which was designed by Daniel H. Burnham and Company, which includes the Courthouse, City Hall, and Federal Building, all a product of the City Beautiful Movement, and finally, the Duluth Hotel, an Italian Renaissance design of 1925 by Martin Tullgren & Sons.

Palmer, Hall and Hunt also designed at least a dozen residences in a variety of styles which include the romantic Sellwood House of 1902 which combines Colonial Revival, Chateausque, and Craftsman, all in the stone; the Ordean House of 1905, and the Zar D. Scott House of 1907. Several of these residences were designed after Palmer and Hall had left the firm. However, Willam A. Hunt is generally considered the major design influence of the partnership.

School construction after the turn of the century tended to reflect more straightforward designs when compared with many of the elaborate buildings of the 1880s and 1890s. There were notable exceptions, however, such as the English Collegiate Gothic design of Denfeld High School built from 1925-26. The school was

²⁵Patricia Murphy, The Public Buildings of the State of Minnesota (St. Paul: The Minnesota Historical Society, 1986), p. 50.

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named for R.E. Denfeld who had served as the superintendent of the Duluth schools for approximately 25 years. It is said that his interest in first-rate educational facilities resulted in Duluth's remarkable collection of nineteenth century school buildings. However, of the city's 32 public schools in operation in 1897, only eight buildings are believed to have survived into the modern era. And of these, schools like Franklin, Emerson, Lakeside, and Lowell have experienced sizeable additions or alterations. Only Endion, Jefferson, Irving, and Central High School have survived in relatively intact condition.²⁶

When Irving School closed in 1982 plans were made for its demolition. However, residents organized to save the building as "an architectural landmark and as an important component of their neighborhood identity."²⁷ The building was also categorized in the Duluth Historic Resources Survey as among "Generally important sites and structures that contribute significantly to the visual and cultural heritage of Duluth. Many.....would also qualify for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. They should be protected from destruction, alteration, or other factors that would diminish their integrity and value." Demolition was delayed and a buyer was eventually found. Irving School has been used to provide housing since that time.

Irving School remains an excellent example of a nineteenth century school building which has remained in nearly original condition. The building is associated with progressive trends within the Duluth school system and it represents an important design by the firm of Palmer, Hall and Hunt, and an early example of the Renaissance Revival Style.

²⁶The loss of nineteenth century schools buildings is quite common as also seen in Minneapolis. Of the 35 buildings constructed between 1880 and 1895, only 3 smaller-scale schools remain.

²⁷"Preserving Irving," Duluth News Tribune, 30 August 1982.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary for Irving School is defined by Lots 9 through 16 of Block 24, and Lots 9 through 16 of Block 25, First Division, West Duluth.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the land and building that have been historically associated with the property and that maintain historic integrity. Lot 8 of Block 24 and Lot 8 of Block 25, which were originally associated with the property, have been excluded because these parcels were transferred to the State of Minnesota and utilized in the construction of Interstate 35 immediately to the north of the school building.



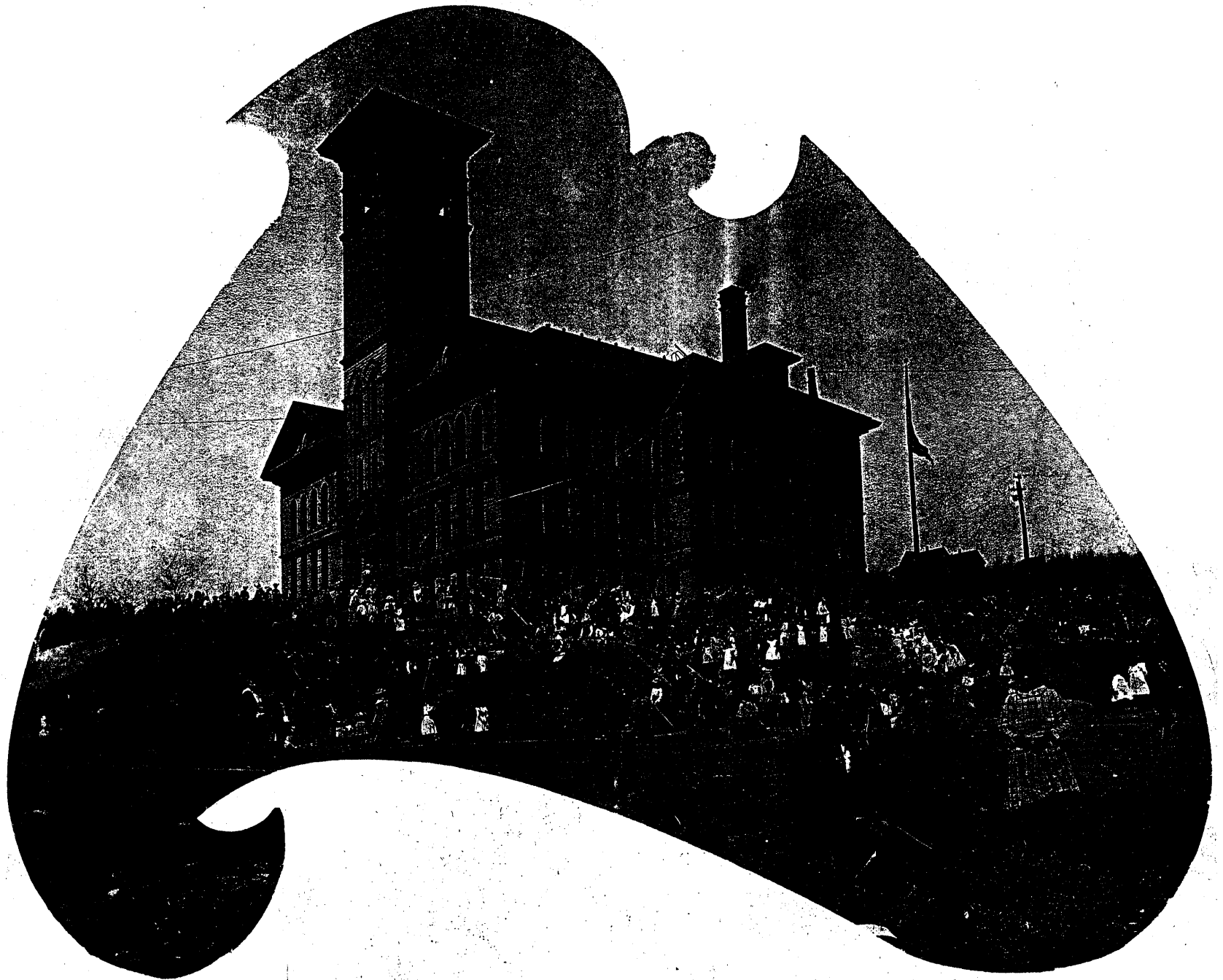
LINCOLN SCHOOL.

Erected 1889.

Palmer & Hall



HIGH SCHOOL—DULUTH. 1891-92 Palmer & Hall

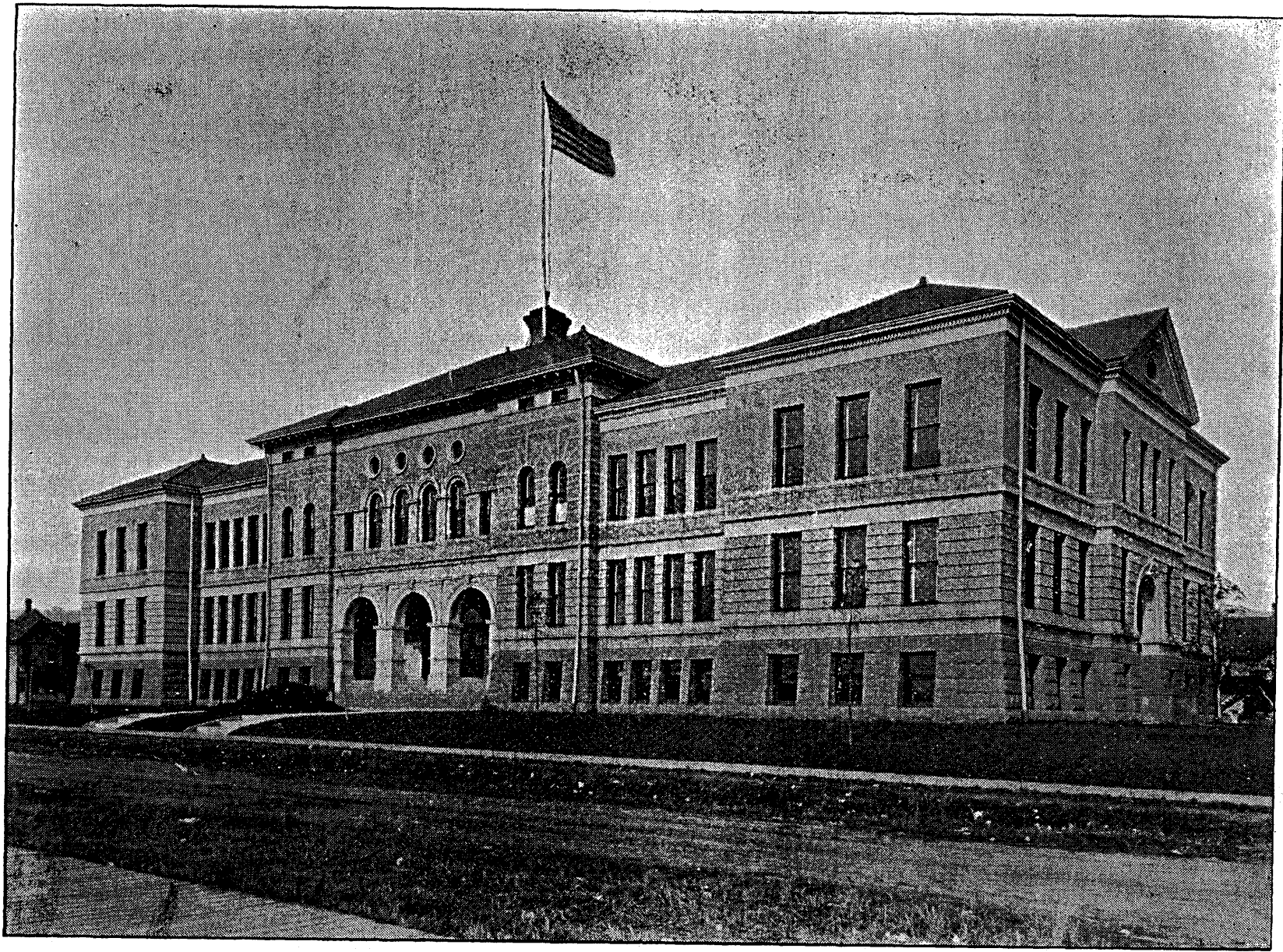


Longfellow School 1891-2

Palmer & Hall

Jefferson School - 1893
McMillan and Radcliff

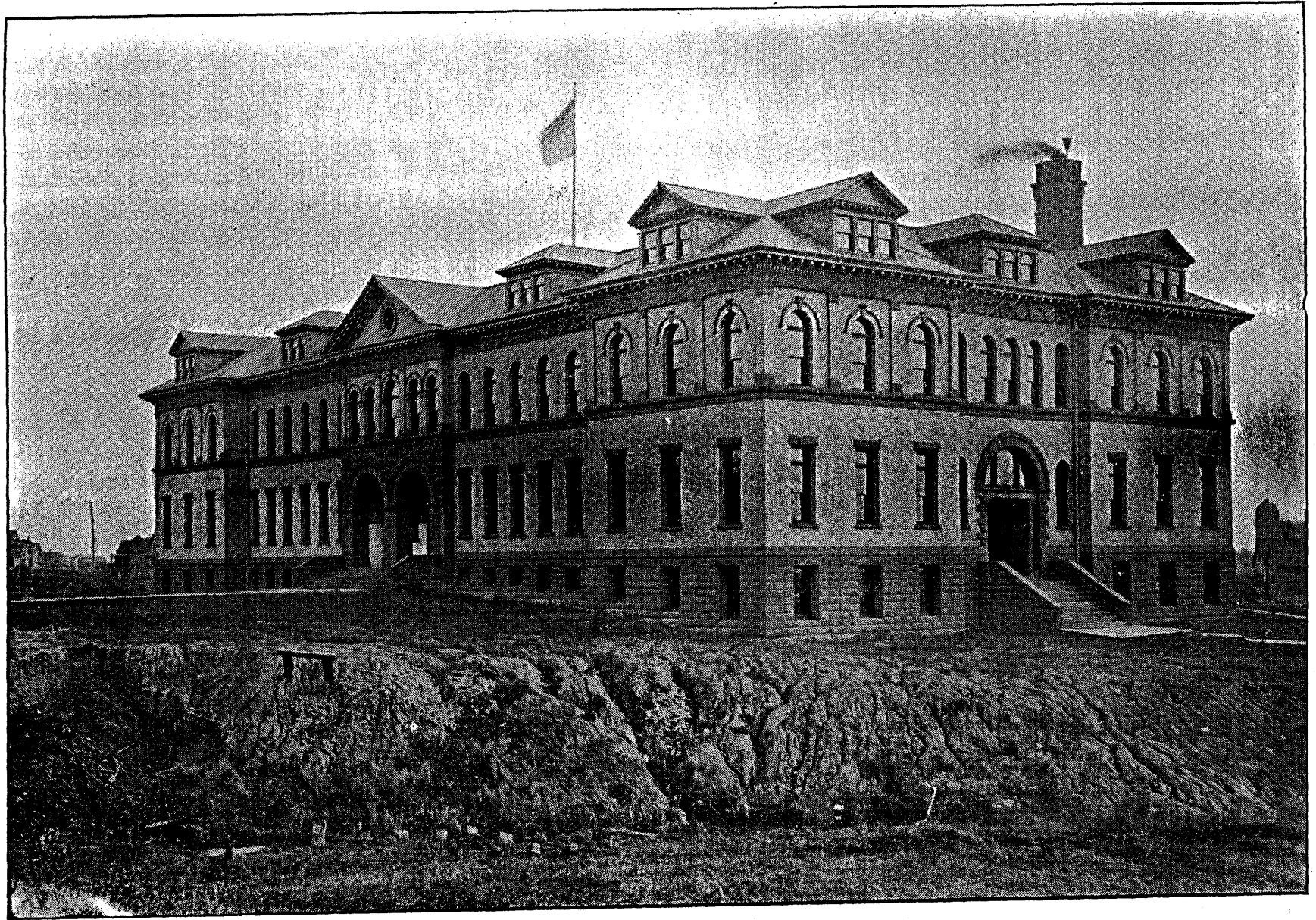




IRVING SCHOOL.

Erected 1893-1895.

Palmer, Hall and Hunt



BRYANT SCHOOL:

Erected 1893-1895.

McMillen and Tenbusch



State Normal School (Old Main) - 1989
Palmer, Hall and Hunt