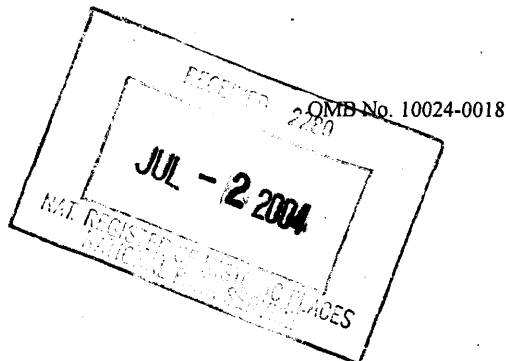


NPS Form 10-900
(January 1992)
Wisconsin Word Processing Format (Approved 1/92)



**United States Department of 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 *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 Owen High School
other names/site number Owen Elementary School

2. Location

street & number 101 East Third Street N/A not for publication
city or town Owen N/A vicinity
state Wisconsin code WI county Clark code 019 zip code 54460

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] Signature of certifying official/Title 6/21/04 Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Owen High School
Name of Property

County Clark
County and State

Wisconsin

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.
___ See continuation sheet.
___ removed from the National
Register.
___ other, (explain:)

Beth Boland

8/11/04

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as
as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

contributing	noncontributing
1	0 Buildings
	0 sites
	0 structures
	0 objects
1	0 Total

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

**Number of contributing resources
is 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)
Work in progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation CONCRETE
walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT

other WOOD

Narrative Description

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

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 1

Owen High School
Owen, Clark County, Wisconsin

Start

INTRODUCTION

Owen High School was completed and opened in 1921. Architecturally, it demonstrates the influence of the American Movement of architecture, predominately the Prairie School.¹ It was designed by St. Paul architect, William L. Alban, a native of Plover, Wisconsin and was built by William Weaver of Owen.² Owen High School has three floors with a basement a half level below grade. The horizontal essence of the design is emphasized by windows banded in horizontal ribbon bands, and the use of an emphatic belt course between stories.³ The centered entry merely suggests a frontispiece and is topped with a stepped parapet. A parapet is present at the top of each side of the school and is finished with a limestone coping. The asphalt roof is flat. The foundation is concrete and the building is entirely faced with brick. The exterior of the school is in good condition and has had very little alteration since its construction.

DESCRIPTION

Owen High School is situated on a flat lot surrounded by large trees. The building overlooks the intersection of Third Street and Central Avenue; Central Avenue bisects Owen's commercial district. This is the extreme south portion of Owen's downtown. A late 19th century residential area begins across the street from the school and extends to the east. A marker for the Yellow Stone Trail appears on the front lawn near the sidewalk. Because of its small scale the marker is not included in the resource count.

Owen High School has a brick base with the basement a half level below grade. The basement is capped at the first floor by a limestone string course. An additional projecting limestone course appears at the top of the second floor and provides the base for the parapet that appears on all sides of the structure. The parapet is finished with a limestone coping on three sides. The first and second floor north fenestration consists of a band of six double hung windows on each side of the frontispiece. Each window is muntined into three vertical panels in the upper light. A recessed area, rectangular in nature and equal in length to the ribbon windows, appears in the brick between the first and second

¹ John Poppeliers and S. Allen, What STYLE is it? (Preservation Press, Washington DC, 1983) pg 80.

² Owen Enterprise, July 19, 1919.

Photo of the Owen High School signed by Mr. W.L. Alban.

National Register Buildings designed by Alban: "Cotton Theater" Cedar Falls, Iowa and "First Methodist Episcopal Church" in Eau Claire, WI.

³ Barbara Wyatt, Cultural Resource Management Vol. 2 (Historic Pres. Div. Of State Historical Society of WI, 1986).

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Owen High School
Owen, Clark County, Wisconsin

floor windows. Each section of ribbon windows is finished with a limestone sill. The first floor limestone windowsill is finished at each end with a rectangular limestone block. The basement level would have had three sets of paired double hung windows on each side of the main entry door. The far left and the far right sets of paired windows have been removed and bricked in one half the way up and then continued in glass block. This is the only exterior alteration to the structure.

At the center of the façade, the double entry doors are reached by a flight of concrete steps. The two entry doors contain a single light and have a single narrow light on each side. An arched transom, muntined into seven panels is over the door with an additional light at each side of the arched light. The limestone string course arches over the arched light. A single lighted sconce appears on each side of the entry. The stairwell between the first and second floor has two bands of three double hung windows muntined into three panels in the upper light. A limestone sill rests below the lower band of windows and has a limestone rectangular block at each end. Two bands of raised stretcher row brick containing a row of inset soldier row brick create an additional band at the top of the second floor windows. Bricks laid in a vertical band are at each side of the front façade window groups. A pressed metal area is present between the upper and lower group of stairwell windows. The embossed section reads "High School". The parapeted area centered over the entry has an arched parapet. A limestone square or block is set into the brick at the inner edge of the left and right embrasure.

The east façade shows a continuance of the limestone string- courses. A projecting limestone string course is visible atop the foundation. The two-door entry is off set toward the north. Over the entry doors is a transom muntined into seven panels. The limestone string course follows the rectangular lines of the light. Two bands of raised stretcher rows of brick, containing a row of inset soldier row brick, create an additional band at the top of the second floor windows. The fenestration of the first and second floor has single and paired double hung windows that are muntined into three panels in the upper light. Each window has a limestone sill. The second floor windows are taller than the first floor windows. The exposed basement level has three single double hung windows. A chimney extends upward from the southeast corner.

The west façade is entirely brick with the limestone string courses and the brick banding course continuing around to the rear. The west side does not contain any window openings. Two doors have been installed at the first and second floor levels. They open onto a fire escape that was added to be in compliance with state fire codes. The 1953 gymnasium addition is attached to the front one half of the west side of the Owen High School.

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Continuation Sheet

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Owen High School
Owen, Clark County, Wisconsin

The brick present on the north, east and west façade is a high-grade multi-color brown shaded commercial brick brought to Owen on the railroad. The vertical bands of brick at each side of the front ribbon windows are a solid dark brown. The entire building is finished with in common variant of the American bond with five stretcher rows per header row.

The brick wraps around the east and west corners of the building and is then dovetailed into the red soft local brick, that covers the balance of the rear of the structure. The rear does not contain any of the limestone string- courses or brick banding that is present on the north, east, and west façade. Two single doors enter the basement level. The first floor has single double hung windows and one band of three double hung windows, which are muntined into three panels in the upper light. The second floor has five bands of windows with three windows in each band.

The interior layout of the Owen School consists of a central corridor on each floor that runs east and west. The corridor connects the east entry open well staircase with the main north open well staircase. The larger spaces (library, gymnasium, auditorium,) and classrooms of thirty-eight foot depth open on to the central corridors from the south. Classroom entry doors contain one light and are topped with a lighted transom. The rooms that enter the corridor from the north are sixteen feet in depth. Two four foot by four foot windows appear in the south wall of the third floor corridor. These windows capture light from the main stairwell and transfer it into the classroom. Maple hardwood floors are used throughout the entire school. The walls are finished in plaster. Owen High School exhibits built-in cabinets and bookcases. The interior window and door surrounds are wood, with simple Prairie School lines. Most spaces, including the stairwells, display a broad, wood chair rail.

The most interesting feature of Owen High School is the original gymnasium, located in the basement level. A stage was present at the east end of the gymnasium. The ceiling of the gymnasium continued to the bottom of the third floor (thirty feet). An overlook was present on the second floor elevation, across from the main stairwell. People would sit on folding chairs and view the activity below.

The Principal's office is located over the open well staircase at the second floor elevation. The office has windows that overlook the second floor open well staircase and corridor. The north wall of the office has large windows that overlook the front school yard, and the junction of Third Street and Central Avenue. The office is entered from stairs that extend upward from the second floor corridor.

The library, located in the southeast corner of the first floor, served both the high school and the Owen community. Owen Community Library operated within the high school from 1921 until the consolidation of the Owen and Withee school systems in 1955. It was then moved to City Hall. The

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Owen High School
Owen, Clark County, Wisconsin

library was accessed from the east entry. It was entered from a landing three steps above the first floor, within the stairwell extending to the second floor.

The architecture represented in the Owen High School is both simple and honest. The use of light created a space for productive educational activities. The design of the building creates optimism, and a genuine sense of purpose. The changes that were taking place in the educational curriculum of the early 20th century are clearly represented in the design of the Owen High School.

ALTERATIONS TO MAIN SCHOOL BUILDING

Owen High School has suffered very little alteration to the exterior of the structure. Exterior changes have been limited to the far left and the far right sets of paired windows that appear on either side of the main north entry of the first floor, which is half level below grade. The windows have been removed and bricked in one half the way up and then continued in glass block. Most other exterior door and window openings remain intact, although several have been boarded over after apparent vandalism. Fire doors were placed at the first and second floor levels of the west elevation. A fire escape was installed. No additional alterations were made to the structure's exterior.

Interior alterations were made to the gymnasium and the first floor area over the gymnasium in 1952. A floor was added at the first floor level and the space was divided into two classrooms. The gymnasium was also divided into two classrooms. The alterations do not compromise the overall integrity of the Owen High School. In addition, they represent the expansion of the school building within the period of significance. Historic exterior photographs of the school exhibit the school remains the same in appearance as it did when it was constructed.

1953 GYMNASIUM ADDITION

Adjoining the west side of the Owen High School is the 1953 gymnasium addition. The main school building and the addition are connected by a doorway east of the stage located in the southeast corner of the addition. The architects of the 1953 gymnasium addition, as well as the 1952-1953 renovations to the existing gymnasium, were Raymond N. LeVee & Associates, of Appleton, Wisconsin.⁴

During the gymnasium's period of construction, the United States government was regulating the amount of steel that could be used in a construction project. This was due to the Korean War. Upon

⁴ Owen Enterprise March 13, 1952

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Owen High School
Owen, Clark County, Wisconsin

receiving authorization from the Federal Security Agency in Washington, D.C., construction began in June of 1952.⁵ The gymnasium addition was built using steel rigid frame clear-span expanse construction. The addition measures ninety feet by one hundred and forty three feet.⁶ The floor is concrete and is surfaced with asphalt tile. The roof is a low- pitched gable and is covered in asphalt.. The exterior of the structure is faced with brick. The cost of the addition was \$151,910.00.⁷ The addition was completed in January of 1953.⁸

The entry foyer or pavilion that appears at the front of the gymnasium is narrower than the main building, and is one story in height with a flat roof. Two three light windows appear on each side of the six door entry. The entry has a three panel transom inscribed "Owen Withee Auditorium," which is etched into the central glass panel. A limestone architrave surrounds the main entrance opening, and surmounts the transom. The window openings on either side of the main entrance are also surrounded with limestone.

The front gable of the gymnasium is flat with little or no overhang. Within the gable end are two rows of four windows, each containing 25 lights. Directly under the gable and continuing down the roof of the foyer is a limestone panel, which is the width of the window rows. The entry pavilion has a limestone parapet. The east-facing wall is solid and does not have a door opening. The south and west facing walls each have one door opening.

The entry foyer is flanked on either side by bathrooms and a ticket office. At the center of the addition is a basketball court having dimensions of fifty feet by eighty- five feet. The south end of the gymnasium has an elevated stage. A music room is found on the west side of the stage and an instrument storage room is on the east side of the stage. Stairs leading to the stage and to the locker rooms beneath the stage appear within the corridors on either side. The stage opening has a brick surround and the doorways leading to the corridors on either side of the stage are also surrounded with

⁵ Owen Enterprise, April, 3, 1952.

⁶ Owen Enterprise, May 22, 1952.

⁷ Owen Enterprise, May 15, 1952.

⁸ Owen Enterprise, January 8, 1953.

⁸ Owen Enterprise, January 8, 1953.

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Owen High School
Owen, Clark County, Wisconsin

brick. Six rows of six single lights provide light to the gymnasium. Three lights light the stage area. The gymnasium addition has had few changes since its completion.

End

Owen High School
Name of Property

County Clark
County and State

Wisconsin

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Education

Period of Significance

1921-1955

Significant Dates

1921
1953

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Alban, William L.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

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Owen High School
Owen, Clark County, Wisconsin

 Insert

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: SUMMARY

Owen High School is nominated under criterion A for its historic contribution to education in the Owen area. The period of significance extends from the completion and opening Owen High School in 1921, through the interior modification of the structure and construction of the gymnasium addition in 1953, to the eventual consolidation of the Owen and Withee school systems in 1955. The Owen High School is an excellent example of a school that embodied the new educational curriculum immerging in the early 20th century. Owen High School represents the diversified educational movement that prepared men and women for either further education at the college level, or for careers in agriculture, trades, industry, or domestic science.

HISTORY OF OWEN

In 1890, logging in southern Clark County was about to end. The second period of lumbering in Clark County was about to begin. This time shipping would be by rail not river.¹

In 1893 the J. S. Owen Lumber Company, headquartered in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, sent W. G. Royer to survey the area where Brick Creek and the Popple River met. This location had a heavy growth of virgin timber that extended north into Taylor and Rusk counties. The J.S. Owen Company purchased 30,000 acres owned by D. J. Spaulding, which covered 400 square miles. What would become the city of Owen was a warehouse, boarding house and five log buildings situated on a railroad line. The J.S. Owen Company dammed Brick Creek and constructed a sawmill, planing mill and company store.

This site was ideal for the removal of timber by rail. The Wisconsin Central rail line was brought through the area in 1880 to provide passenger service between Abbotsford and Chippewa Falls. In 1881 the rail line was extended to Ashland. Owen became the northern terminal of the Fairchild & Northwest Railroad in 1907. This rail line was also connected with the Duluth & St. Paul division of the Soo Line in 1907. The Soo Line offered passenger service extending in four directions from Owen offering six passenger trains a day. By 1918, the J. S. Owen Lumber Company had installed and was operating twenty-five miles of railroad in Clark and Taylor counties, for the purpose of removing logs. The mill officials did not anticipate a long run for the sawmill. They thought perhaps five to six years. Instead, through the use of the railroad, the lumber mill operated for more than 40 years. The capacity

¹ "Book of Years" Clark County Centennial 1853-1953

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Owen High School
Owen, Clark County, Wisconsin

of the mill increased from 5,000 board feet when it first opened to 15,000,000 board feet. In 1932 the last log was sawed at the Owen Mill. The mill was dismantled and sold May 29, 1935 to the Western Condensing Co.²

In 1904 the Village of Owen had a population of 315 people.³ Incorporation began in August 19, 1904 and was granted to Owen on November 8, 1904. By the year 1914, 200 families a year were locating in the Owen area. Owen's population expanded to 1,000 residents in 1914 and to 1,200 residents by 1924.

The Owen family gave birth to this Clark County community. Aloney R. Owen, the son of J.S. Owen, immediately located to the new settlement, to direct the affairs of the company. Besides operating the sawmill, the Owen family looked to the future of the Owen area. As the timber was removed and the land became cut over, the company advertised and sold land with this statement: "Reasonable prices and easy terms to those who give the promise of permanence." Because of the foresight of the Owen family, the land around Owen went from stumps to fertile farms.⁴

The community continued to be nurtured by the Owen family. In 1906 the Owen Company established the Owen Box and Crating factory. The famous Woodland Hotel was opened in 1906, which was also operated by Owen enterprises. The Woodland Hotel was an elegant attraction for travelers. In 1915 the Owen Lumber Company opened a retail lumber store known as the O. & N. Lumber Company. The Owen family organized the State Bank of Owen in 1907 with J. G. Owen as President. In 1914 the State Bank of Withee was organized; A. R. Owen was president. A bottling works, movie theatre, telephone company, and three hotels were supported by the Owen family. The Owens donated land for a city park and for each church built. In 1914 A. R. Owen dismantled a church in Eau Claire and moved it by rail to Owen. He had the church reassembled naming it St. Katherine, after a daughter who died in childhood.

J. S. Owen died in 1939 at the age of ninety. His son, A.R. Owen, continued to operate the lumber company as well as the many additional family enterprises. A. R. Owen died March 16, 1951.⁵

² Owen Wisconsin a Commemorative History 1925-2000, pgs 6-13.

³ H. C. Cooper Jr. & Co. History of Clark County (1918), pg 650.

⁴ Clark County the Heart of Wisconsin Clark County publication, 1914.

⁵ City of Owen Wisconsin Golden Jubilee 1925 - 1975, pgs 5-8.

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Owen High School
Owen, Clark County, Wisconsin

As with many other small communities founded upon the lumber industry, when the mills closed the major employer and his spirit of investment vanished, and the community struggled for prosperity.

HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN OWEN

The first school in Owen was a one-room school built in 1894. In 1899 and 1902 two new rooms were added. The first eighth grade commencement was held in 1901. The structure was removed in 1907 when a two-story brick school was erected. This structure was used for elementary instruction as well as a three-year high school. This structure was demolished in 1989. Owen did not offer a full four-year high school course until 1909. Mr. Elmer Nygaard and Miss Myrtle Barker upgraded the curriculum to the accreditation standards of a Free High School in 1911. In that year, Frank Griffin was the first four-year graduate.

The years between 1914 and 1920 saw rapid expansion of the Owen Mill. This expansion caused a growth in population and school conditions became crowded. As more families located to the area, the education of their children became a concern. A small building was erected at the east end of Owen to be used for the third grade students. Later it was converted to a residence for the school principal. Classes were also held in a church basement, and in a small cottage behind the school. A. R. Owen served on the Owen school board and it was becoming apparent expansion would be needed.⁶

A School District meeting was held July 7, 1919 to authorize \$45,000 to be borrowed for the construction of a new high school. Bonds of \$500 and \$1000 were to be issued to raise the preliminary funds.⁷ Construction plans for a new high school were approved by the Joint Free School District in July 1919.⁸

Owen High School was designed by architect William L. Alban. Mr. Alban's architectural offices were located in St. Paul, Minnesota. William L. Alban was born in Plover, Wisconsin in 1873. In 1911, William L. Alban formed an architectural partnership with Charles A. Hausler. Their offices were located in the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce Building. Charles A. Hausler is well known for

⁶ Owen Wisconsin a Commemorative History 1925-2000.

⁷ Minutes of School District Meeting, July 7, 1919.

⁸ Owen Enterprise, July 19, 1919.

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Owen High School
Owen, Clark County, Wisconsin

his designs of several St. Paul schools. In 1913 the partnership was dissolved.⁹ By 1916, William L. Alban had established his own firm in the Endicott Building in St. Paul, Minnesota. It appears that he continued in solo practice until becoming apart of the Ellerbe & Company architectural firm after 1942. The Ellerbe & Company architectural firm was also in the Endicott Building. William L. Alban retired from the firm in 1953 and passed away in St. Paul in 1961.¹⁰

William L. Alban designed two buildings that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The "Cotton Theatre" at 103 Main Street in Cedar Falls, Iowa, and "First Methodist Episcopal Church" at 421 S. Farwell in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.¹¹

The Village of Owen, at their board meeting October 13, 1919, purchased the lot for the new school from K. Rojewski for \$1700.¹² On September 19, 1919 William F. Weaver began excavation and construction of the foundation for the Owen High School. The cost of the foundation was \$7,882.¹³ On March 4, 1920 William F. Weaver was awarded the contract for the completion of the outside of the school (roof, windows, exterior brick) and the roughing in of the room areas and floors for the amount of \$34,096.¹⁴ On March 18, 1920 lumber and bricks were unloaded to begin the project. This portion of the project was to be completed by September 1, 1920.¹⁵ At the School District Meeting July 6, 1920 a vote was passed to issue more bonds to raise monies for the completion of the school.¹⁶

In March of 1921 two rooms were completed in the new Owen High School and were occupied by students.¹⁷ The contract for the completion of the building was again given to William F. Weaver. It

⁹ Charles A. Hausler Papers, 1912-1954, Northwest Architectural Archives, University of Minnesota

¹⁰ St Paul Pioneer Press, July 4, 1961.

¹¹ National Register of Historic Places

¹² Office of Village Clerk Owen Wisconsin Village Board Proceedings October 31, 1919

¹³ Owen Enterprise, September 13, 1919.

¹⁴ Owen Enterprise, March 4, 1920.

¹⁵ Owen Enterprise, March 18, 1920.

¹⁶ Minutes of School District Meeting, July 6, 1920.

¹⁷ Owen Enterprise, March 17, 1921.

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Section 8 Page 5

Owen High School
Owen, Clark County, Wisconsin

was hoped that the building would be finished and entirely open in the fall of 1921.¹⁸ The furniture contract was awarded to Northwestern School Supply Company of Minneapolis, Minnesota.¹⁹ Upon the completion of the Owen High School project in the fall of 1921, 117 rejoicing students entered the new building and took up their studies with renewed energy.²⁰

Due the increasing size of the high school student enrollment in the early 1950s, often referred to as the "Baby Boom Era," the school board, led by J. R. Barager, decided it was necessary to remodel the existing high school. The remodeling project involved adding a floor over the gymnasium and dividing both the gymnasium and the new floor area into two separate rooms. The additional areas were used to enlarge the library, and to create areas for agricultural science, and a foods laboratory, classes that were part of the expanding high school curriculum.²¹

The new gymnasium addition was constructed at the same time as the remodeling. The importance and benefits of athletics was being stressed nationally. Fitness was promoted to strengthen not only the body, but also the mind. In 1913, the first Owen High School basketball team was organized."²² Owen High School, as many high schools in Wisconsin, has had a deep interest in basketball, and has participated in WIAA state basketball program. The Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association began its State Basketball Tournament program in 1916.²³ How fitting that the first public opening of the 1953 Owen High School Gymnasium was on the night of January 9, 1953 for a Cloverbelt Conference tussle with their archrival Withee.²⁴ The 1953 gymnasium addition was the finest facility in the area and hosted many WIAA regional and sectional games as part of "March Madness" with the winners qualifying for the State WIAA Basketball Tournament in Madison. Additional activities such as proms, concerts, plays, and graduations were also held in the 1953 gymnasium.

1955 saw the consolidation of the Owen and Withee school systems. Each community continued to operate its own grade school. Senior high students who had attended the Owen High School and

¹⁸ Owen Enterprise June 2, 1921

¹⁹ Owen Enterprise July 21, 1921

²⁰ The Cloverleaf 1923 Owen High School Year Book

²¹ Owen Enterprise March 13, 1952

²² The Cloverleaf 1923 Owen High School Year Book

²³ wisswi.org/basketballboys/basketballboysindex.html

²⁴ Owen Enterprise January 8, 1953

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Owen High School
Owen, Clark County, Wisconsin

junior high students (grades 7-9) now attended the Withee High School. In 1957 a hot lunch program was established and served the consolidated schools from a central kitchen in the Owen graded school. In 1964 eight rural schools were closed and united into the Owen-Withee School system. A junior-senior high school was built between Owen and Withee. The elementary grades 4-6 attended school in Owen and grades 1-3 attended school in Withee. The consolidated school district in 1975 served 1,089 students. In 1984, an elementary school addition was built, making one Owen-Withee school complex.²⁵

After the 1984 elementary addition to the Owen-Withee High School, the Owen school buildings were no longer used. The property was sold and began to deteriorate. In 1989 the grade school was condemned and demolished. The property, including the 1919-21 Owen High School, was taken by Clark County in 1995 and offered for sale. That same year the "Friends of the Old School" was organized to buy and save the Owen High School and its adjoining gym. Many local residents hold memberships in FOSI, as well as alumni living in 17 states and in Africa. A nine-member board leads the directive of the group. The FOSI have instituted repairs throughout the building and are continuing renovations. The FOSI are planning to house a museum containing community artifacts within the Owen High School. The 1953 gymnasium uniquely provides a large area that the FOSI leases for events, reunions, and even basketball practice. The monies generated provide revenue used to institute renovations and restorations to the building.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Educational philosophy was changing at the close of the 19th century. The curriculum of discipline, recitation and drill would no longer satisfy rapidly changing America. The United States population had doubled between 1850 and 1890 and a new industrial society was forming. American cities were growing, due greatly to the continued growth of the railroad. People were not oblivious to these changes and saw the need for the educational system to respond.

Four major forces formed within the educational community, each recognizing the opportunity that was presenting itself. School curriculum would be the tool for social reform and promised social progress. The philosophy that emerged was that public education was a way to Americanize the vast number of immigrant children and that education was a way to teach all children proper values.²⁶

²⁵ Owen Wisconsin A Commemorative History 1925 - 2000, pgs 14-16.

²⁶ Herbert M. Kliebard American Curriculum 1893-1958 (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986).

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Owen High School
Owen, Clark County, Wisconsin

Compulsory education laws existed in all states in 1918. These laws ensured that all children between the ages of six and fourteen would receive a basic education in the elementary grades. Local and state governments retained most of the responsibility for the operation of public education.²⁷ The 1919 Smith-Towner Bill, in Sec 8 Art. 1, allowed the United States Government to appropriate money for education.²⁸

The new technological society had a need for greater specialization of skills. Earlier, many students left their education before high school. They followed their parent's footsteps into agriculture, the trades, or small family businesses.²⁹ Because of growing specialization, the growth of students attending a secondary school rose from 6% in 1890 to 51% in 1930. If the student could be prepared for job force entry, attending high school was a worthwhile investment.

Vocational and industrial programs were instituted in the high school setting by school reformers to entice the working class to stay in school. The Europeans, most notably the Germans, were undergoing industrial revolutions. Their successes were attributed to introducing trade and industrial programs into their educational programs.

G. Stanley Hall and John Dewey, two curriculum reformers, introduced the importance of offering several courses of study. Recommended among the course studies were industrial education, manual arts, and science. Dewey's theory was to build the curriculum around fundamental social occupations. In rural areas the need was also seen to apply teachings of school to the farm. President Theodore Roosevelt spoke of "fitting the man for the shop and the farm".³⁰

John Bobbitt brought forth his "Platoon System" which increased the efficiency of space within a school by shifting the students from multi-purpose classrooms to specialized classrooms (laboratories,

²⁷ 2000 Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia

²⁸ Proceedings of the 66 Annual Session of the Wisconsin Teachers Assoc. Milwaukee Nov. 6-8 1919(Democrat Printing Co. State Printer, 1919).

²⁹ ed.gov/pubs/EdReformsStudies/EdReforms/chap1a.html

³⁰ Owen Enterprise, April 1, 1920 "The Rural School and the Community" Clark Co. Superintendent O.J. Thompson

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Section 8 Page 8

Owen High School
Owen, Clark County, Wisconsin

manual arts shops, and gymnasiums) in a systematic fashion. Bobbitt felt that education should prepare one for life. The objectives of curriculum should be numerous, definite and particularized.³¹

Reformer David Snedden proposed that the sixth grade should end the common curriculum. The secondary school should be defined in terms of curriculum of differentiation, in order to make men efficient.³² The Milwaukee public schools systems lead the way of the "manual training movement" by embracing and instituting these courses in their schools.

As Owen was embarking on a period of growth and expansion, the Owen educational system embraced the philosophies of Hall, Dewey, Bobbitt, and the Milwaukee school system and began to institute them into the curriculum of their new school.

Architect William Alban incorporated the ideals of educational reformers into the Owen High School. Alban designed specialty classrooms used specifically for individual topics, where other classrooms would have a multitude of purposes. The *Owen Enterprise* newspaper, in July of 1919, described the curriculum to be offered upon completion of the Owen High School. These selections included (in addition to history, English, Latin, algebra, music and commercial law), manual training, sewing, cooking, and agricultural and laboratory sciences.³³ In 1922 the additional subjects of biology, bookkeeping, and second year Latin were offered.

Athletics played an important role at Owen High School. The first Owen High School basketball team was organized in 1913. Mr. Good, the high school principal, was the team's founder. During the administration of Owen High School's next principal, Mr. Walter, Owen became prominent in athletics. The concern for a good athletic program also influenced what would be included in the new Owen High School building project: "Not the smallest part of the new feeling of renewed energy was caused by the athletic advantages which the new gymnasium afforded."³⁴ The new high school would contain a large gymnasium, with an overlooking balcony for basketball competitions.

³¹ Herbert M. Kliegard, American Curriculum 1893-1958 (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986).

³² Herbert M. Kliegard, Schooled to Work (Teachers College, Columbia University, 1999).

³³ Owen Enterprise, July 19, 1919.

³⁴ The Cloverleaf, 1923 Owen High School Yearbook.

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Section 8 Page 9

Owen High School
Owen, Clark County, Wisconsin

Physical education programs were being instituted nationally for both boys and girls. The United States was instituting a policy that physical education should be of national interest.³⁵

A stage area, at the east end of the gymnasium facilitated the inclusion of plays and concerts. This opportunity aided in broadening the student's experiences. The Owen High School began a music department in 1916 under the choral direction of Mrs. Arthur M. Wilson. The musical traditions continued in 1931 when instrument instruction was begun. A high school band was formed in 1932 under the direction of Mr. M. Hamel. The setting was now created, within this school, for a diversified education, as well as for sporting events, concerts and plays and the first prom in which was held in 1922.³⁶

Clark County School Superintendent O. J. Thompson quoted President Wilson's message to Congress in 1920. Wilson spoke of the importance of making rural life more attractive to stop the flow of people from the farms to the industrial areas. Mr. Thompson felt the country boy and girl should have the same opportunity for an education as a city boy and girl.³⁷ The new Owen High School would offer that opportunity through an education of choice and diversity as directed by the 1924 Manual for the High Schools of Wisconsin.³⁸

Owen High School was an entity utilized by the community. Having the Public Library located within the school enabled the entire community to use and identify with the building. The community was interested and excited by the school's basketball program. The interest was so great as to tremendously influence the dominance the gymnasium would have on the original building's design. The building was also used for activities not related to high school. In the 1930s Civil Service exams were given in the auditorium. After the Korean War, returning soldiers attended "Young Farmers" educational classes.³⁹

³⁵ Proceedings of the 66 Annual Session of the Wisconsin Teachers Assoc, Milwaukee, Nov. 6-8 1919 (Democrat Printing Co. State Printer, 1919)

³⁶ Owen Enterprise, July 19, 1919.

³⁷ Owen Enterprise, April 1, 1920.

³⁸ A Manual for the High Schools of Wisconsin 1924 Prepared by J.T. Giles, H.W. Schmidt, S.M. Thomas State High School Superintendents (Madison, Wisconsin, 1924).

³⁹ Student June Roohr recollections.

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Section 8 Page 10

Owen High School
Owen, Clark County, Wisconsin

Owen High School is an excellent example of an early twentieth century school constructed in such a manner, dedicating itself to the specialized curriculum needs of students preparing for college, preparing for the farm, preparing for industry, or preparing for employment or ownership of a local business. Gone was the old style of education. The Owen High School student could select a line of study directed related to the career he or she would choose to pursue. The philosophy that "a strong body produced a strong mind" is very apparent in the amount of the building dedicated to the gymnasium. Sports played a very important role in the total high school experience. The community's interest expressed toward basketball facilitated the 1953 addition. The increase in the number of classrooms within the original building a result of the remodeling also allowed for the expansion of the curriculum.

The design of the Owen High School, by architect William L. Aban, lends itself to this new specialization of classrooms. The school is spacious with very high ceilings and uses light and the transfer of light extremely well. The new philosophy of student movement from classroom to classroom provided for the maximum use of the entire building. The Owen High School served both the students and the entire community with the location of the community library within the school. The gymnasium provided healthy activity and fueled community spirit. The school continued to serve the community until the construction of the joint Owen-Withee junior-senior high school in 1964. The Owen High School was the source of community pride.⁴⁰

The memories and pride experienced by former Owen High School students is exhibited in the formation of the organization "Friends of the Old School." Their hope is to preserve the Owen High School, along with the 1953 gymnasium addition, for future generations. This building represents a portion of each of their lives and the role the school had in preparing them to become productive citizens. Many former students, many no longer living in Owen, have felt the impact the Owen High School made in their lives. By belonging to the FOSI and supporting this preservation project, they keep alive the spirit generated when they were young. That spirit is still alive today.

Criteria Consideration G

The period of significance for this building has been extended to 1955. This date marks an important transition in the history and use of the Owen High School. With the consolidation of the Withee and

⁴⁰ Owen Wisconsin A Commemorative History 1925-2000

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Section 8 Page 11

Owen High School
Owen, Clark County, Wisconsin

Owen school districts in that year, the Owen High School became an elementary school and the older students left this building for the high school in Withee.

End

Name of Property

County and State

9. Major Bibliographic References

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

Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):

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

Primary location of additional data:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local government
- University
- X Other

Name of repository: Owen Enterprise Newspaper
Owen/Withee School District Office, Owen Clerk

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 7.84 Acres _____

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

1	15	692122	4979792	3	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Nothing		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	Patricia A. Lacey, Historic Preservation Consultant			date	
organization				telephone	715-743-4799
street & number	W5055 US HWY 10			zip code	54456
city or town	Neillsville	state	WI		

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Section 9 Page 1

Owen High School
Owen, Clark County, Wisconsin

Insert
REFERENCES

Herbert M. Kliegard, American Curriculum 1893-1958, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986.

Herbert M. Kliegard, Schooled to Work, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1999.

Barbara Wyatt, Cultural Resource Management Vol. 2, Historic Preservation Division of State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986.

Proceedings of the 66 Annual Session of the Wisconsin Teachers Assoc., Milwaukee, Nov. 6-8, 1919, Democrat Printing Co., 1919.

A Manual for the High Schools of Wisconsin 1924, Prepared by J.T. Giles, H.W. Schmidt, S.M. Thomas, State High School Superintendents, Madison, Wisconsin, 1924.

"Book of Years" Clark County Centennial, 1853-1953.

Owen Wisconsin A Commemorative History 1925-2000.

H. C. Cooper Jr. & Co., History of Clark County, 1918.

Clark County the Heart of Wisconsin Clark County publication, 1914.

City of Owen Wisconsin Golden Jubilee 1925-1975

Minutes of Owen School District, 1919 and 1920.

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ed/gov/pubs/EdReformStudies/EdReforms/chap1a.html

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Section photos Page 2

Owen High School
Owen, Clark County, Wisconsin

Photo 10 of 12
View of entrance to Principals office.

Photo 11 of 12
View of built-in cabinets.

Photo 12 of 12
View of 1953 Gymnasium Addition looking southeast

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

7 Historic Photographs of Owen High School on 3 pages.

Owen High School
Name of Property

County Clark
County and State

Wisconsin

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/title	Esther Niedzwiecki	date	
organization	Friends of the Old School Inc.	telephone	715-229-2245
street&number	W5121 County Road N	zip code	54460
city or town	Owen	state	WI

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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Section 10 Page 1

Owen High School
Owen, Clark County, Wisconsin

____ Insert

VERBAL BOUNDARY DISCRPTION

The parcel on which the Owen High School is located encompasses Lots 1 thru 5 Blk 7, Lots 1 & 2 Blk 8 and Outlot 84A ex N416' of E 20' & ex comm. at NW cor of Lot 2 Blk 8 Original Plat the S 345' th E 40' to POB th E 110' S 90' W 110' N 90" to POB Assessors Plat City of Owen. The south boundary of the parcel is the Popple River and the north boundary of the parcel is Third Street. The parcel encompasses 7.84 acres.

VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The historic boundaries of the Owen High School coincide with those of the legal parcel on which it sits. These boundaries enclose the contributing school building and its addition and the green space historically associated with the Owen High School.

____ End

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Section photos Page 1

Owen High School
Owen, Clark County, Wisconsin

Insert

Photo 1 of 12

Owen High School, Owen, Clark County, Wisconsin

Photo by Pat Lacey, August 2003

Negative on file in the Wisconsin Historical Society

View of North facing (front) façade, looking south.

The information for the photos is the same as the above, except as noted.

Photo 2 of 12

Close up of Metal Raised "High School". View of north facing façade, looking south.

Photo 3 of 12

Close up of ribbon window and brick recessed panel. View of north facing façade, looking south.

Photo 4 of 12

Close up of parapeted area centered over entry with arched battlement. View of north facing façade, looking south.

Photo 5 of 12

View of east facing façade, looking west.

Photo 6 of 12

View of west facing façade showing connection of the 1953 non-contributing Gym as attached to Owen High School, looking northeast.

Photo 7 of 12

View of south facing façade, looking north.

Photo 8 of 12

View of interior door to library.

Photo 9 of 12

View of interior hallway windows allowing light into classroom.

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Section photos Page 2

Owen High School
Owen, Clark County, Wisconsin

Photo 10 of 12
View of entrance to Principals office.

Photo 11 of 12
View of built-in cabinets.

Photo 12 of 12
View of 1953 Gymnasium Addition looking southeast

End

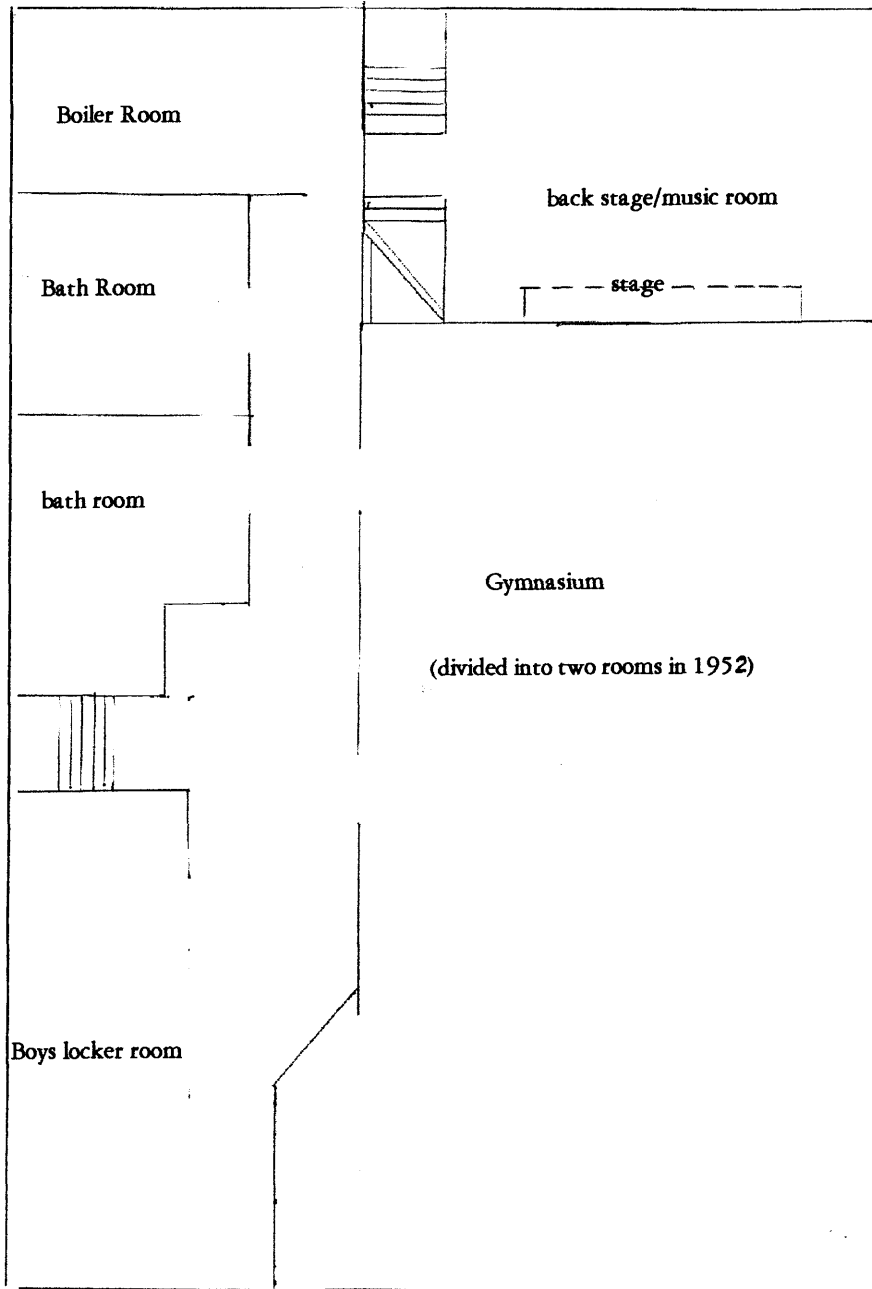
BASEMENT LEVEL OWEN HIGH SCHOOL

101 East Main Street

Owen, Clark County, Wisconsin



No Scale



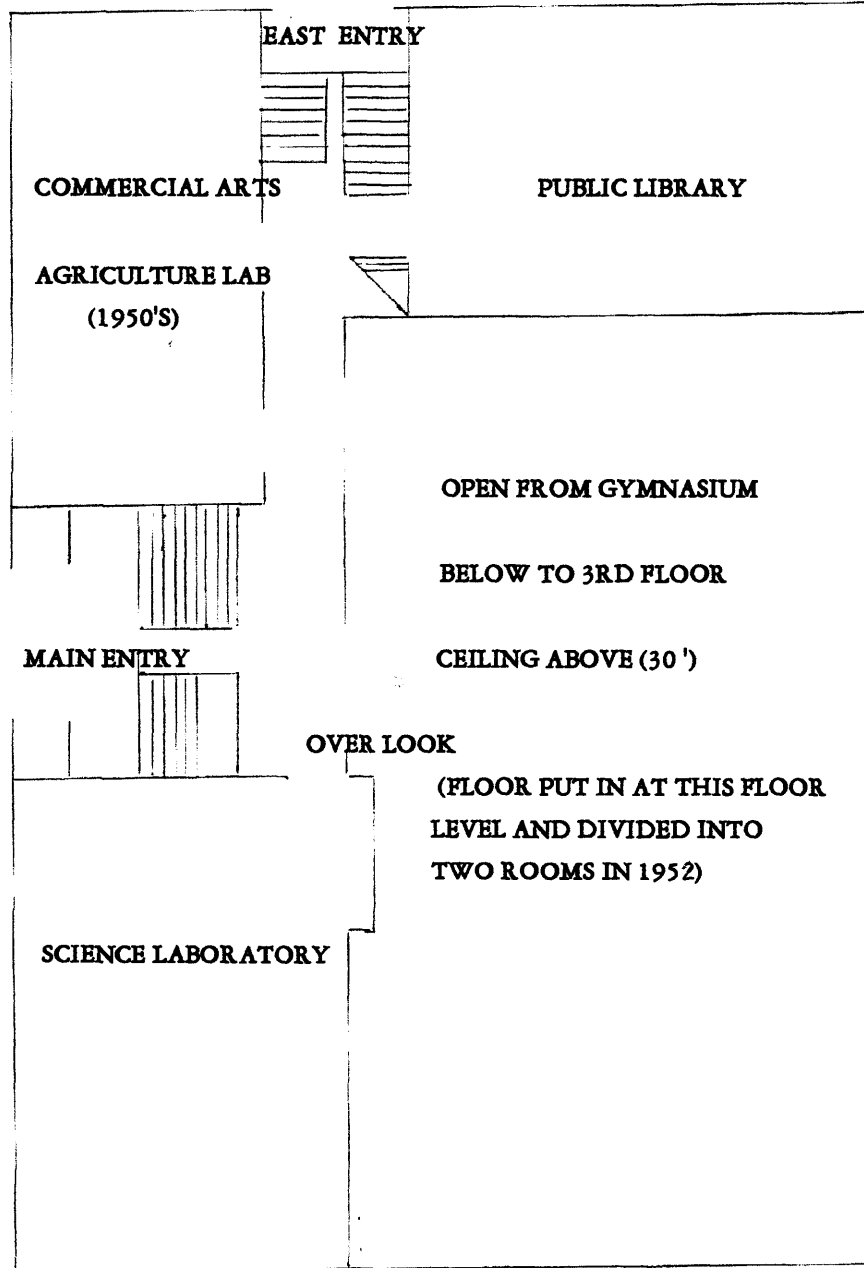
1ST FLOOR OWEN HIGH SCHOOL

101 East Main Street

Owen, Clark County, Wisconsin



No Scale



2RD FLOOR OWEN HIGH SCHOOL

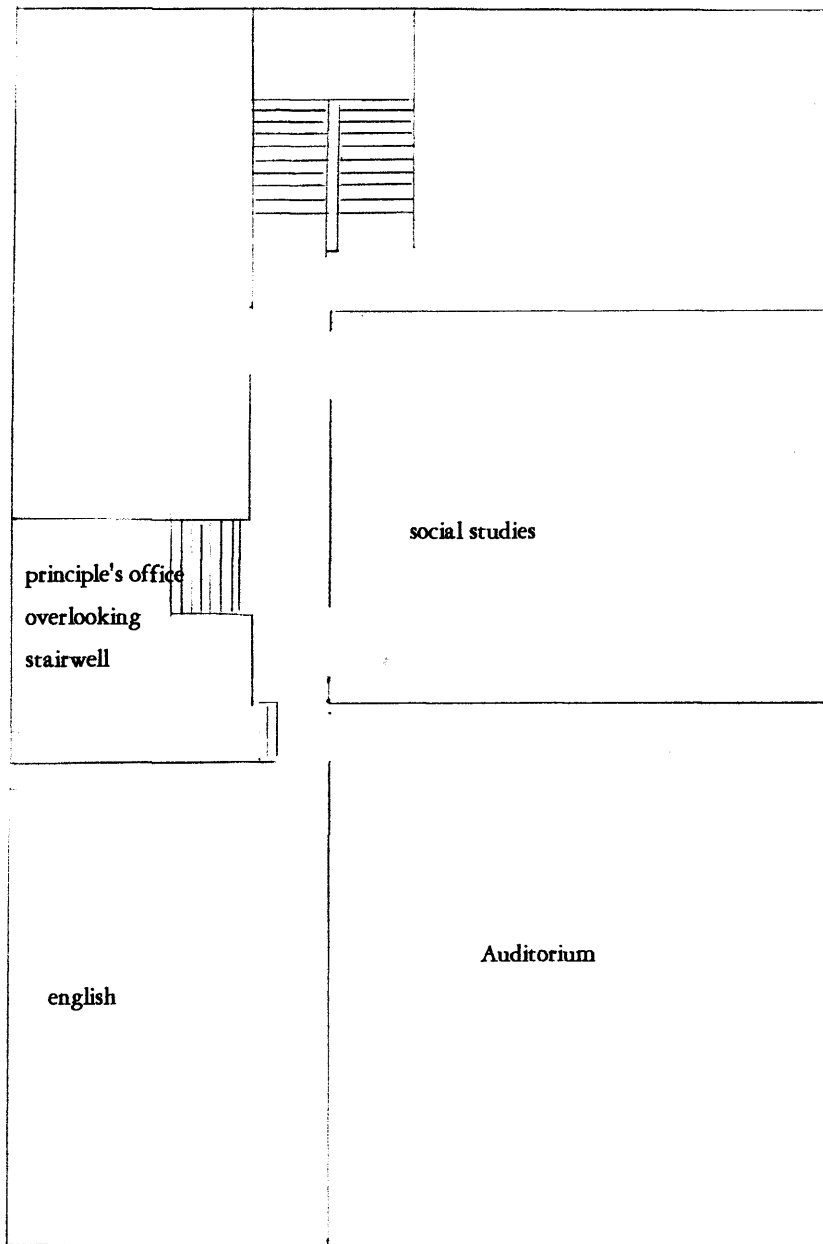
101 East Main Street

Owen, Clark County, Wisconsin



north

No Scale



Owen High School
Owen, Clark County, Wisconsin
1953 Gymnasium Addition
No Scale

