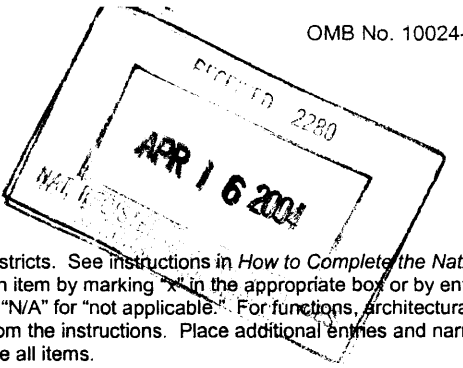
NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 10024-0018



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *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, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Morris High School

other names/site number

2. Location

Street & number 600 Columbia Avenue ___ not for publication N/A

city or town Morris ___ vicinity N/A

state Minnesota code MN county Stevens code 149 zip code 56267

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination 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 X meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally X statewide ___ locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Nina N. Archabal 4/6/04

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Nina N. Archabal, Director and State Historic Preservation Officer, MN Historical Society

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 certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is: Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

✓ entered in the National Register. Betsy Boland 5/25/04
___ 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:) ___

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	0	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)

Education: School

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements: Bungalow/Craftsman

Modern Movement: Art Deco

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls Brick
Stone
roof Ceramic Tile
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.)

X **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: N/A

__ **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
1914-1950

Significant Dates
1915, 1934, 1950

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
See Continuation Sheet

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 on 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 #

Primary location of additional data:
- __ State Historic Preservation Office
- __ Other State agency
- __ Federal agency
- __ Local government
- __ University
- X Other

Name of repository:
Stevens County Historical Society, Morris

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approx. 17.7 acres

Morris, Minn., 1973
Revised 1994

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	15	273450	5052660
2	15	273450	5052460
3	15	273220	5052300
4	15	273040	5052480

___ 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 Susan Granger, Scott Kelly, Kay Grossman, and Sue Dieter

organization Gemini Research date Sept. 15, 2003

street & number 15 East 9th Street telephone 320-589-3846

city or town Morris state MN zip code 56267

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 _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

7. DESCRIPTION

The Morris High School is located in Morris, Minnesota, a city of about 5,000 people in west central Minnesota. At the time that the school was built, it was located near the eastern edge of the community. Since 1914-1915 Morris has grown and now the school is more centrally located.

See attached map entitled "Sketch Map, Morris High School, Morris, Stevens Co., Minnesota." Note: Morris was platted along the St. Paul and Pacific Railroad tracks, which run diagonally between Willmar and Fargo through west central Minnesota. Both the tracks and Morris's early streets are aligned on a diagonal, rather than with cardinal points. In the property description below, the direction "north" should be interpreted as facing Seventh Street, "south" as facing Fifth Street, "east" as facing College Avenue, and "west" as facing Columbia Avenue.

The 17.7-acre school property comprises one large parcel that is bounded by Columbia Avenue, College Avenue, and Fifth and Seventh Streets. The school property is located in a mixed residential and commercial neighborhood. Seventh Street was a state highway from 1920 until about 1960 when the highway was realigned several blocks to the north. There are several small pre-1960 commercial structures located on the northern side of Seventh Street across from the school. Surrounding the school on the west and south are houses. East of the school are two adjacent cemeteries and the campus of the University of Minnesota, Morris.

School Building

The school building, which faces west, stands on a hill on the western portion of the property. The building was prominently sited near the "top" of Sixth Street so that its main facade can be seen from several blocks away by someone looking eastward up Sixth Street.

The Morris High School building consists of a central core, built in 1914-1915, and wings that were added in 1934, 1949-1950, and 1956. The 1934 and 1949-1950 wings fall within the period of significance, which is defined as 1914-1950 for the purposes of this nomination.

The central structure, built in 1914-1915, is a two-story, Craftsman style building with a raised basement. It was designed by Alban and Lockhart of St. Paul and built by Standard Construction Company of Minneapolis. The school is basically rectangular and symmetrical in plan. The two outer bays of the western and eastern (rear) facades project forward from the main mass of the building by several feet. The building is built of hollow tile with poured concrete floors and a woodframe roof (Sanborn 1927/1952). The building is faced with textured, medium-brown brick with mortar joints that are tinted brown. The brick is trimmed with darker brown, contrasting brick and with smoothly-dressed light gray limestone that forms sills, a watertable, and other

trim. There is distinctive Craftsman-style, cruciform ornamentation made of limestone near the top of the main facade.

The school has a hipped roof covered with red ceramic tiles. At least one large skylight on the roof illuminates the attic. Above the center of the main facade is a hip-roofed dormer whose exterior side walls are faced with red ceramic tiles. The dormer has a large multipaned window, paired brackets at the eaves, and a flagpole rising from its roof. There is a smaller shed-roofed dormer above the eastern facade. The school has wide overhanging eaves decorated with purlins and with paired, curvilinear brackets. The eaves, purlins, and brackets were originally stained and preserved with dark brown creosote, although most of the color has now weathered away. There is an original, tall, rectangular brick chimney near the northeastern corner of the building.

The main and rear facades have expansive rectangular window openings. The openings were originally filled with banks of double-hung, multipaned sash arranged in groups of four and five. The openings on the first and second floors are now filled with panels of glass block installed above rectangular crank-out windows. The basement level openings have been filled with modern metal-framed sash.

The main entrance to the building, located at the center of the main facade, has an ornate, stepped limestone surround. Within the surround is a segmental-arched door opening that is outlined with rope-like leaf detailing. The opening was originally filled with a wooden, multipaned double-leaf door and a multipaned transom. The opening is now filled with a modern, metal double-leaf door and a metal panel blocking the transom. The school originally had similar doorways on the northern and southern side walls.

Projecting from the rear facade is a brick garage, which is part of the original design. It was enlarged circa 1949. It has a poured concrete foundation and floor, brick exterior walls, and two modern, roll-up garage doors.

The interior of the 1914-1915 school is basically intact. It has 15 classrooms. A prominent central stairway leads from the main entrance to the first floor. All three levels have rooms arranged on both sides of central halls, which are aligned north and south. At the northern and southern ends of the halls are stairways that connect all three levels. The basement of the building has a gymnasium, boys' and girls' locker rooms with showers, three classrooms, and two storage rooms. The first floor has administrative offices, and six classrooms. The second floor has six classrooms. One of the classrooms on the second floor has a small stage at the southern end and was originally the school's assembly hall. Most of the halls and rooms retain original plaster walls and woodwork that is lightly stained and varnished. The original wooden classroom and office doors have single-paned transoms. Most of the floors are covered with linoleum tile although the building retains some areas of original wooden flooring and some areas of post-1915 ceramic tile flooring.

1934 Wing

The 1934 wing is a combined auditorium and gymnasium that was added to the southern side of the high school in 1934. It was designed by A. B. Dunham of Minneapolis and built by Carl Swedberg of Wheaton.

The auditorium-gymnasium is an Art Deco style structure that is built with a concrete structural system, faced with brick (Sanborn 1927/1957). It has a rectangular plan and a flat roof. The exterior walls are faced with medium-brown brick that is trimmed with contrasting dark-brown brick and smooth gray limestone. The main facade, which faces west, has a powerful Art Deco-inspired central bay that thrusts both forward and upward. The facade has a stepped roofline and compound fluted piers that flank a rectangular entrance area. The entrance area has four single-leaf doors for patrons to enter the building. (The doors were originally wooden and multipaned, and are now metal and single-paned.) The rhythm of the doors is matched by four rectangular window openings located above the doors at the balcony level. The main facade has liberal amounts of decorative brickwork forming geometric patterns. The sills are stone, and there are stone bands at the ground level, at the watertable level, and near the roofline. The parapet walls at the top of the exterior walls are now covered with brown sheet metal.

The southern facade of the auditorium-gymnasium has large rectangular window openings that were originally filled with multipaned sash and are now filled with glass block. A double-leaf door near the rear of the southern facade was originally wooden and multipaned and is now a modern metal door. The rear (eastern) facade retains upper-level, rectangular window openings that light the gymnasium.

The interior of the auditorium-gymnasium is basically intact. Immediately inside the main entrance is a small lobby with a terrazzo floor and ornate Art Deco light fixtures. There is an intact ticket booth with a smooth, black stone counter and other Art Deco detailing. Single-leaf doors lead from the lobby to the main level of the auditorium, and two stairways lead from the lobby to the balcony level. The auditorium has plaster walls and ceilings with Art Deco detailing, as well as hanging Art Deco light fixtures. It has original, folding, wooden seats on both the main floor and balcony levels that accommodate about 630 people. Single-leaf doors on the rear wall of the auditorium lead to two small rest rooms. The stage has a proscenium arch and heavy velvet curtains. The building's intact wooden floor doubles as both stage floor and gymnasium floor. The gymnasium portion of the building has glazed tiles covering the lower walls and painted brick on the upper walls. Two sets of double-leaf wooden doors on the northern wall lead to the rest of the high school. In 1949-1950, a 26'-deep rear addition added bleacher seating to the gymnasium and a band room in the basement. The bleachers, which seat about 450 people, are simple wooden benches mounted on concrete risers. Natural light enters the band room via rectangular, multipaned windows on the rear wall.

It is presumed that the 1934 wing included a small one-story brick-faced connection between the auditorium-gymnasium and the high school to allow students to pass between the two. It may

have included a room for storage of athletic equipment. In 1956 this link was enlarged to include a school foyer on the lower level (which has glass-fronted exhibit cabinets on the north wall), four classrooms (two on each of the two upper levels), and a storage room. The rectangular window openings on the upper two stories of the link have been partly filled with metal panels. The rear of the link is basically intact.

1949-1950 Wing

On the northern side of the high school is a classroom wing that was built in 1949-1950. It was designed by George W. Pass, Jr., of Mankato and built by George Madsen of Minneapolis. It has 14 classrooms on three levels. The 1949-1950 wing has a restrained, post-World War II design. It has a flat roof and a reinforced concrete structural system (Sanborn 1927/1957). The exterior is faced with medium brown brick. The northern facade is dominated by rectangular bands of windows that are slightly recessed behind the simple brick wall surface. The windows have areas of glass block at the top and crank-out windows below. The southern and western facades also have rectangular windows, some of which are double-hung. One particularly large bank of windows on the western facade lights an industrial arts shop at the basement level. There is a principal entrance on the western facade located beneath a flat canopy.

Most rooms are arranged on either side of central halls that are aligned east and west. There are six classrooms on each of the two upper floors. In the basement are a cafeteria with a kitchen, a boiler room, and two classrooms, one of which is an industrial arts shop. The interior of the 1949-1950 wing is basically intact. Halls and classrooms have plaster walls, linoleum tile floors, and lightly stained and varnished woodwork. A one-story, brick-faced library was added to the northern side of the 1949-1950 wing in 1975. It has a rectangular arrangement of metal-framed windows and a single-leaf door on its northern facade. A small, semi-circular concrete patio is located outside the northern doorway. A brick-faced tower for an elevator and utilities was added to the eastern (rear) side of the 1949-1950 wing in 1995. It provides handicapped access.

1956 Wing

A wing with about 12 classrooms was added to the school in 1956, outside of the period of significance. It was designed by Traynor and Hermanson of St. Cloud and built by Nelson Construction Company of St. Cloud. It is a two-story, flat-roofed structure with an International-style inspired design. The exterior is faced with medium brown brick. There are wide horizontal bands of windows on the northern and southern facades. The windows were reduced in sized with enameled metal panels circa 1975. A principal entrance on the northern facade is located beneath a flat canopy and features metal-framed doors and large windows.

The 1956 wing has rooms arranged on either side of central halls that are aligned east and west. In addition to the 12 classrooms, the wing has a gymnasium with a small stage at one end, a library (now a classroom), and administrative offices. The interior is basically intact with plaster walls, linoleum tile floors, and lightly stained and varnished woodwork.

Other Structures and Landscape Features

In front of the school building are simple pipe railings that date from circa 1940, areas of grassy lawn, and large areas of poured concrete including sidewalks and pedestrian pick-up areas. There are several deciduous and coniferous trees and shrubs, both mature and newly-planted. North of the school is a large grassy lawn with deciduous and coniferous trees and shrubs, most of them mature. South of the school is a bituminous-paved parking lot. This area was originally a grassy lawn. East of the school are athletic fields and a playground, described below.

Athletic Fields and Playground

The eastern portion of the school property consists of athletic fields and a playground that encompass about 15 acres. The athletic fields were designed by architect Frank W. Jackson of St. Cloud and constructed by the WPA in 1940-1941. The first three acres of the 15-acre area (now occupied largely by the 1956 wing and adjacent playground) were purchased in 1929. The remaining 12 acres of the athletic area were purchased in 1940, bringing the school property to its current size of about 17.7 acres.

The athletic fields and playground are located at a lower elevation than most of the school. The hillside that leads from the building eastward down to the fields has traditionally been Morris's most popular sledding hill for younger children.

The athletic fields and playground are surrounded by trees and a fence. A row of mature spruce trees planted circa 1940 lines Seventh Street and College Avenue north and east of the fields. Deciduous and coniferous trees, both mature and young, are located south of the fields along Fifth Street. A chainlink fence borders the fields along Seventh Street, College Avenue, and Fifth Street.

The playground is located directly east of the 1956 wing. It contains swings and other equipment for elementary grades. East of the playground is a large, flat, grassy field area that is used for physical education classes, soccer games, softball games, varsity football practice, and related activities. Historical uses were very similar.

An east-west row of deciduous trees (many mature poplars, some trees recently planted as replacements) separates the northern half of the athletic field area from the football field area.

The southern half of the athletic area is dominated by a football field and track. The topographical challenges of the site, with the school building located above the fields, were successfully met by the architect who placed the football field and track in a sheltered "bowl" beneath the elevation of College Avenue, Fifth Street, and the current school parking lot. A tennis court was placed east of the football field. A set of poured concrete steps lead from the

parking area down to the field. At the top of the steps is a small, flat-roofed, concrete block ticket booth that was built circa 1949-1950 but may have been planned by Jackson circa 1940. Not far from the bottom of the steps is a matching one-story, flat-roofed, concrete block concession stand that was also built circa 1949-1950 but may have been planned by Jackson in 1940. The track, which surrounds the football field, has concrete curbs and a cinder surface that is in poor condition. The football field and track have an electronic scoreboard, a small woodframe announcer's stand, wood and metal bleachers, and a small woodframe gable-roofed shed for lawn mowers. These elements were probably all installed after 1950 but are replacements of earlier versions of similar equipment.

Summary of Resources

For the purposes of this nomination, the Morris High School consists of two resources, listed below:

School building	1914-1950	One Contrib Building
Athletic fields/playground	1940-1941	One Contrib Site

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

ARCHITECT/BUILDER, CONTINUED

Alban, William Linley (Architect)
Lockhart, G. L. (Architect)
Standard Construction Co. (Builder)
Dunham, Arthur Barrett (Architect)
Swedberg, Carl (Builder)
Public Works Administration (Builder)
Jackson, Frank W. (Architect)
Work Projects Administration (Builder)
Pass, George W., Jr. (Architect)
Madsen, George (Builder)
Traynor and Hermanson (Architect)
Nelson Construction Co. (Builder)

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Morris High School is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A, significance to the broad patterns of our history, in the area of Education. Built in 1914-1915 with additional wings in 1934 and 1949-1950, the building is significant as an excellent representative of the development of modern public schools in small Minnesota communities in the early- to mid-20th century. The school and its site illustrate the continual change that American public schools underwent as enrollment increased, as their mission became more comprehensive, and as academic and extra-curricular programs were added. The property is significant on a statewide level.

City of Morris

Located in the prairie region of west central Minnesota, Morris was platted in 1869 by the St. Paul and Pacific Railroad on the company's main line between St. Paul and Fargo. The town was named for C. A. F. Morris, a St. Paul and Pacific official. The railroad tracks bisected the city, dividing it into an "East Side" and a "West Side." This geographical division and the tracks themselves remain prominent features of the town today. The first passenger train arrived in Morris on July 25, 1871, and the town was incorporated in 1878. Morris became the largest community in Stevens County. Located near the southeastern edge of the Red River Valley -- one of the state's richest agricultural areas, Morris flourished as an agricultural service center. It always remained small, however, with a population that did not exceed 3,000 until about 1940. From the mid-1880s through 1909 Morris was also home to one of the state's largest government

boarding schools for Native American children. From 1910-1963 this campus was the West Central School of Agriculture (WCSA), an agricultural boarding high school operated by the University of Minnesota (listed on the National Register 2002). The campus is now the University of Minnesota, Morris, established in 1960.

Schools in Morris

Morris's first public school was built in 1873. It was a small woodframe building located on the West Side that was soon replaced with a larger building on the same site called Central School. Beginning in the mid-1880s, Morris maintained two public school buildings, one on each side of the tracks. The East Side School was built circa 1884 near the site of the current Morris hospital. The West Side School was built in 1885 on the site of Central School, which had recently burned. The two were referred to as East Side School and West Side School until 1897, when they were renamed Lincoln and Longfellow, respectively. Both schools housed grades 1-12.

The Morris public schools comprised a single school district called District 1. In 1872 the district was 15.2 square miles, a size it retained through at least 1948. Like most public school districts in the United States, the Morris school district was operated by a citizen-elected Board of Education, a superintendent, a principal, and group of teachers and other staff.

The district served the Euro-American families who settled in Morris, Minnesota, and surrounding farms. Racially the population was homogeneous, but culturally there was some diversity (particularly in the years before World War II) because of the area's Scandinavian, German, Irish, and other European immigrants.

The Morris High School, built in 1914-1915, was historically called the "Morris High School," even though for several years only half of the town's high school students attended it, and even though it also served half of the town's grade school children. In some pre-1960 Board of Education minutes it is also referred to as "the East Side building."

West Side high school students continued to attend Longfellow School for many years after the Morris High School was completed in 1915. Grade school students were also divided, with all East Side grade school students attending the new Morris High School and all West Side grade school students attended Longfellow. Eventually all Morris high school students were consolidated in the high, while junior high and lower grades apparently continued an East-West split. It is not clear exactly when and how the town's various grades were combined into single buildings. School board minutes from the 1930s and 1940s reflect several periods of community discussion on the arrangements. For example, in May 1939, the school board approved a plan making Longfellow strictly an elementary school. However, two weeks later the plan was rescinded when 25 parents and district citizens appeared before the Board to object (Minutes, May 16, 1939). Longfellow continued to be used as a public school into the 1980s although it was always hampered by lack of a kitchen and cafeteria. Near the end, Longfellow housed first

and second grade classrooms along with the district's Early Childhood Family Education classes. Today it is a privately-owned office and apartment building.

The Morris public schools were just one of the city's educational offerings in the early 20th century. The West Central School of Agriculture (WCSA), established in Morris in 1910, was a high school that drew students from about 15 counties including students from the Morris area. The WCSA offered traditional high school classes as well as intensive training in agriculture, home economics, and related fields. WCSA enrollment was about 170 when the Morris High School was built. St. Mary's School, a Catholic school established in 1911, offered a general education as well as religious instruction for grades 1-12. The St. Mary's building was built in 1914. Students who lived outside of Morris in the surrounding townships generally attended one-room schoolhouses through the eighth grade. After the eighth grade, students usually either attended high school in Morris or began working on the farm.

The Morris High School

The Morris High School was built in 1914-1915 to replace overcrowded and aging facilities. Lincoln School (circa 1884) and Longfellow School (1885) were both 30 years old at the time, and the city's population had doubled from 743 people in 1880 to 1685 in 1910.

Talk of building a new high school was officially underway by at least the spring of 1913 when a state high school inspector, George Aiton, addressed a group of Morris residents and denounced Lincoln School as being "inadequate and overcrowded." The *Morris Sun* noted that if the school district did not build a larger facility, they would not "enjoy the benefits of the state aid that we are now getting, for the state demands that certain facilities be provided and a certain degree of efficiency be preserved in order to retain this state aid" ("Behind The Times" 1913).

Local residents, including 25 businessmen, circulated a petition early in May 1914 requesting a special election to vote on a $75,000 bond issue for the construction of a new high school. The school board accepted the petition and set the election for May 22, 1914. A large voter turnout overwhelmingly passed the bond issue. A total of 641 votes were cast, with 445 in favor and 196 against. The *Morris Tribune* reported, "This is one of the largest votes ever cast in the city, so that the verdict for a new school was decisive" ("Bonds Are" 1914).

Within days of the election the state board of investment rejected the bond application due to "technical defects." In particular, the school district had inadvertently included the price of the land purchase in the bond issue ("Bonds Are" 1914). Another election was held June 26, 1914, with a lower voter turnout due to a heavy rain during which ". . . many people found it impossible to reach the school house on account of the flood of water in the streets" ("Bonds Again" 1914). The bond issue again passed with a vote of 136 to 39.

The site for the school was chosen by special election on September 16, 1914. The voters chose between two possible sites: the city park on Seventh Street (the current East Side Park) and land

at the "east end" of Sixth Street that was to be donated by L. C. Spooner, an attorney and state legislator who was also a major supporter of the WCSA. The Spooner property was selected. Through the next several decades the school was a great source of pride to community members, many of whom revered the new building as "a temple of learning on the hill" (Day 2003).

The 500-pupil school was designed by Alban and Lockhart, a St. Paul firm with extensive experience in school design. The *Morris Tribune* reported:

> . . . these gentlemen have been closely allied with the progressive movement in school architecture. The senior member of the firm, Mr. Alban, has practiced architecture in St. Paul during the past 14 years and has been identified with the construction and design of some 75 or 80 of the best school buildings in this part of the country. Mr. Lockhart has practiced architecture for the past 12 years in the East and South, having since the first of the present year been associated with Mr. Alban. His practice has covered a wide range of school buildings so it is to be expected that Morris will secure the advantage of their best efforts and experience in the construction of the new building ("New High School" 1914).

School board minutes note that the architects received $1,800 for developing the plans.

A detailed description of the new building was published in the *Morris Tribune* in September 1914 and construction contracts were awarded the following month. The general contractor bid of $51,854 was awarded to Standard Construction Company of Minneapolis. J. H. McGuire of Morris was awarded the plumbing and heating contract for $10,305 ("Contract Awarded" 1914). The school eventually cost about $80,000. The cornerstone was laid on November 20, 1914, in a ceremony that was short and simple because of cold weather.

The "24-room", three-level school was completed in September of 1915, although not quite in time for the first day of classes. The *Morris Tribune* reported that "More or less confusion among school children was caused Monday morning with the announcement that the new high school building would not be used as per plans. Many who gathered were directed to the west side high school and to the Lincoln building where lessons were assigned and where the school sessions are being held." The school's 500 new desks had been delayed in arriving, and then workmen had to install them before the classrooms could be used ("Old School" 1915).

In mid-October, with students in place in the new school, the *Morris Tribune* devoted the front page of the October 15, 1915, issue to educational institutions in Morris. Under the banner "Morris 'The Little City With The Big Schools,'" the *Tribune* noted: "Morris is distinctively a city of schools. Its school advantages distinguish it from the various other desirable little cities of the agricultural section of Minnesota. . . . A strong educational tone is maintained in the city. Liberal support is given to lecture courses and entertainments designed not only to please but also to instruct" ("Morris The Little City" 1915).

The issue included an article by School Superintendent Robert W. Davies who recalled the state inspector's disparaging comments of 1913 and boasted that the city had redeemed itself:

> A few years ago while he was speaking before a group of citizens assembled in the old high school [the Lincoln] building, Mr. Geo. B. Aiton, then state high school inspector, made the following remark: 'The people of Morris,' said he, 'should build a new high school to replace this inadequate structure you now have. Twenty years ago I pointed with pride to the school building at Morris, but now the other towns have so far outstripped you in building modern schools that I never mention Morris at all.' Since this remark was made the people of Morris have reclaimed their lost prestige by building one of the finest school plants in the state of Minnesota (Davies 1915:1).

The superintendent also described the new school in the *Tribune* article, calling it "imposing in architectural beauty, superior in equipment, and adequate to properly house the twelve grades besides the special departments." Davis also remarked: "The exterior color scheme of a reddish brown pressed brick and tile red hip roof never fails to excite favorable comment from visitors and sightseers" (Davies 1915:1).

The new Morris High School reflected modern trends in the design and construction of schools as well as modern reforms in curricula and programs. According to the Davies article, the school had a 65' x 40' gymnasium with locker rooms, a wood shop and machine shop, a domestic science kitchen, a sewing room, and a small kitchen and lunch room, all in the basement level of the building. The second floor housed the grade school classrooms (consisting of grades 1-8 -- the Morris school did not yet distinguish "junior high" or "middle school" grades from primary grades). The third floor was devoted to high school classrooms including the assembly hall, the "commercial" or business classroom, math and English classrooms, and physics and chemistry laboratories (Davies 1915:1).

The new Morris High School was staffed by Davies, who had been superintendent since 1911, nine grade school teachers, four high school instructors, and four special instructors (Davies 1915:2). On staff were Etta Lundstrom, high school principal; Grace Dunwiddie, mathematics and history; Hale Crilly, English; Roy Soronson, science; Vera Jones, normal department; Cora Severson, domestic science; Hattie Stokes, commercial department; Charles J. O'Connell, manual training; Julia Hanrahan, eighth grade; Margaret Gossen, sixth and seventh; Anna Murphy, fourth and fifth; Nellie Moran, second and third; and Nell Smith, first grade. Most of the teachers appear to have been single and female ("March To School" 1915).

Concurrent Developments in Education

The Morris High School was built during a period of expansion in American public education, from about 1910-1930, during which educational funding increased, the number of schools increased, enrollment increased, education became more professionalized, and many of the modern programs that exist today -- whether academic or extracurricular -- were put into place.

Historian Theodore Blegen writes that the reforms of this period were launched in Minnesota by the legislature's first law to encourage rural school consolidation, passed in 1911. Blegen says this law "ushered in a revolution in public education [in the state]. School planners, architects, and citizens collaborated on buildings, facilities, faculties, and modern means of transportation to enable cooperating communities to keep in step with American education in an era of progress. The 'little red schoolhouse,' cherished in American folklore, [eventually] became obsolete. It could not meet the demands of the modern era" (Blegen 1963/1975:412).

In Minnesota during this period, school funding from the state and federal governments increased, schools were given greater incentive to comply with state standards, curricula improved, and school terms lengthened (McConnell 1931; Blegen 1963/1975:409-413). Teacher training also improved -- by 1913 Minnesota had established six state normal schools to train teachers and in 1913 the state began to require that high school teachers obtain a bachelor's degree. (The same was not required of elementary school teachers until 1961.)

State regulation of schools increased between 1900 and 1925 both in Minnesota and nationwide. As the state's educational system became more complex, the legislature created a public school commission in 1913 to recommend major revisions to the public school codes. The commission recommended a single state board of education that would combine the responsibilities of at least four separate governing bodies. Following these recommendations (but after some delay) Minnesota's modern state board of education was created in 1919, four years after the Morris High School was completed.

The number and quality of high schools (as well as grade schools) increased in Minnesota and nationwide during this period. In 1905 Minnesota had 174 high schools with a total enrollment of about 20,000 (Blegen 1963/1975:412). The number of accredited high schools in the state doubled between 1900 and 1915 (the year the Morris High School was completed) (McConnell 1931). The Minnesota high schools were among about 14,300 public secondary schools in the United States in 1920. By 1938 the number had grown to 25,000 public secondary schools. (In 1952 there were slightly fewer, or 23,700 schools. This decline reflects the continued consolidation of rural schools -- despite the fact that more total students were attending secondary schools nationwide (Stiles et al 1962:52-53).)

Nationwide, high school attendance grew during the early 20th century, just as overall school attendance increased. In 1900, the number of American children attending school beyond the eighth grade was about 10 percent. The number doubled between 1912 and 1920. In 1920 about 28 percent of American youth ages 14 to 17 were in school. Educational scholar Joel Spring writes,

> It was during the 1920s that the high school truly became an institution serving the masses. By 1930, 47 percent of youths between the ages of fourteen and seventeen, or 4,399,422 students, were in high school, and during the Depression years of the 1930s the American

high school began to serve the majority of youths -- enrollments increased to 6,545,991 in 1940, representing two-thirds of the population between the ages of fourteen and seventeen (Spring 1994:214).

Boys, farm children, and children of lower socio-economic groups attended high school less often than the national norm. In 1920, for example, boys made up only 44 percent of high school enrollment nationwide. They comprised 46 percent in 1930. In 1930 about 39 percent of rural youth were in high school, in contrast to about 58 percent of urban youth (Krug 1972:120). In Minnesota in 1940, 56 percent of farm boys and 37 percent of farm girls (ages 16 and 17) were not attending school. Among the reasons were lack of transportation, being needed to work at home, and a lack of parental encouragement. There is some evidence of this attitude reported in a 1976 history of Stevens County by Edna Mae Busch. When writing about the history of School District 11 in the town of Donnelly, Busch notes that children over the age of 13 were rare in school. She also write that, "the state Commissioners, visiting the school [in an unknown year in the early 20th century], complained that the Scandinavians were too lax in sending their children to school" (Busch 1976:152).

Historian Thomas Morain, who has studied small towns in Iowa, explains some of the difficulties faced by farm children:

> At the turn of the century each township was dotted with country schools, often one every two miles, so that a township six miles square might have as many as nine country schools. The rural school was within walking distance of farm children and taught the equivalent of the first eight grades. . . .
>
> For most rural children in 1900 [in Iowa] the one-room school [teaching grades 1-8] was the extent of their formal education. To continue to study a farm child often had to board in town through the week and pay the town district tuition. . . . Until a state law in 1911 required [Iowa] school districts that did not maintain a high school to pay the tuition of any of their students who attended classes outside the district, tuition expenses were another deterrent to farm children. In addition, particularly for farm boys, attending school meant loss of valuable farm labor. Consequently, many farm families could not justify the expense of high school education. In 1916, according to a state report, the chance of a town child enrolling in high school was six times greater than that of a rural [farm] child. While town schools were offering twelve years of graded curricula and expanded academic and extracurricular attractions, rural schools did not have enough students to justify a basic program beyond elementary levels (Morain 1988:134-135).

Some farm children near Morris were able to get rides to high school during the spring and fall, but had to board in town during the winter months to be able to attend. This practice continued for some time. A 1954 graduate recalls boarding with a classmate in an upstairs apartment in a home near the school. She worked at a local cafe before and after school to pay the rent. This

arrangement also allowed her younger siblings to attend functions in town and sleep overnight, rather than having to walk back to the farm late in the evening (Awsumb 2003).

In Jefferson, Iowa, the small town on which Morain concentrated, some farm children were driving the family car to high school by about 1940. He notes that they were generally the only students who had access to cars during the school day, a fact that gave them much social prestige (Morain 1988:137).

Not only did the number of schools and number of children enrolled change during the early 20th century, but the nature of schools themselves changed. The Morris High School was constructed in the midst of a period of educational reform that was in part credited to the Progressive Era (1890-1920) during which many of the country's charitable, educational, civic, and public institutions were either established or reformed. During this period, public schools became much broader in scope, and moved from a more limited mission of teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic to a much broader concern for students' physical, psychological, social, and academic development. Teaching methods evolved from an emphasis on memorization and recitation to more student participation. Many schools for the first time introduced programs in health education, citizenship training, mechanical or industrial training, business, and home economics. Many educational theories that are common today -- that there are individual differences in learning and interest, that learning works best when it is less passive and more active, and that education should include creative self-expression -- were developed during this period (Cremin 1975:148-149). The concept of the "child-centered school" -- familiar to us today -- was quite a departure from earlier theory and practice (Cremin 1975:151). Universal enrollment in schools became the goal, and the schools' potential to transform society and to improve the lives of children (especially those born without social advantages) were ideas that became well-developed.

Beginning in the early 20th century, the use of school facilities by the larger community grew nationwide as their programs broadened, their facilities expanded, and their social role became more comprehensive. By 1930 public schools in Morris and elsewhere were used by a wide range of non-school groups including Boy Scouts, community musicians, drama groups, political organizations, and others.

High schools evolved into their modern form about the time the Morris High School was constructed. According to educational historian Edward A. Krug, the American high school had been in the process of development since about 1880, but "its major doctrinal formulation [was] set forth in the decade before 1920" (Krug 1972:xiii). Central to this evolution was the concept that a public high school should be a comprehensive, co-educational institution designed to educate all of the youth in a given community. Public high schools became comprehensive by offering a broad range of programs, became almost universally co-educational (after some experiments with single gender schools), and sought the democratic idea of an education for all children. (In practice these same principals did not apply to African-Americans, Native Americans, and the children of other "racial minorities" in the United States for many decades.)

Academics

American public school curricula had been evolving since the 19th century, but resembled their modern form by the early 20th century. Most American high schools offered 12 fields of study in the 1920s. Five were academic (English, foreign languages, mathematics, science, and social studies) and seven were nonacademic (business, manual or industrial arts, agriculture, home economics, art, music, and physical education) (Krug 1972:55). Smaller schools often did not offer the full array. About 25 percent of a student's classes were generally electives, even though during the 1920s educators were continuing to debate whether students should be able to choose some of their fields of study. (Proponents believed electives would reduce the dropout rate and allow students to find areas in which they might individually excel. Opponents felt that allowing students to choose too much of their course work would lower the quality of their education, and academic standards overall, because students would choose only the easiest courses.)

Vocational Training

When the Morris High School opened in 1915, much was made of its new, modern vocational facilities that included manual training and domestic science rooms, and a commercial or business room. The manual training rooms included a wood shop and machine shop with four lathes, a table saw, a handsaw, and a jointer "all run by electricity" (Davies 1915:1). Home economic rooms included a kitchen and a sewing room, both equipped with modern equipment including electric stoves (Davies 1915:1). The manual training and domestic science departments were both located in the basement level. In 1915 there were "about 30 high school boys and 35 high school girls [who] receive daily instruction in the useful arts of the shop and home. The upper grade boys and girls are given this instruction weekly" (Davies 1915:1). The commercial or business classroom was located on the second floor and had four Underwood typewriters. The Morris High School also had a normal department, which served high school students who were preparing to become teachers. (Teachers' training courses were added to many Minnesota schools in the 1910s.) The normal department was located on the first floor near the grade school classrooms (Davies 1915:1).

In Minnesota, vocational training (including industrial or mechanical, agricultural, home economics, and business training) became more widespread in high schools after Congress enabled federal funding for these programs under the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917. There was much national debate about adding vocational training to the curriculum of the nation's high schools. Some critics felt that vocational training simply trained children to be efficient industrial workers with little regard to the personal benefits and economic advancement they might gain from a liberal arts and perhaps more demanding education. Some supporters felt, however, that not all students were academically inclined, and that vocational education allowed them to find a non-academic area in which to excel.

Joel Spring explains:

> In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, American society and the educational system were transformed by the impact of urbanization, industrialization, and immigration . . .
>
> Of profound importance to the future of American education was the decision to organize the school system to improve human capital as a means of economic growth. In fact, the development of human capital as a means of solving problems in the labor market became a major educational goal of the twentieth century. It resulted in the acceptance of vocational education as a legitimate part of the educational system and the establishment of the comprehensive high school designed to provide students with differing curricula to meet their various interests in a complex and specialized society (Spring 1994:188).

In 1954 historian Lewis Atherton wrote of early 20th century public schools in small Midwestern towns,

> In contrast to nineteenth-century high schools, where girls greatly outnumbered boys because they planned to teach, and boys saw little reason to continue beyond the grades unless they were preparing for a professional career, the twentieth-century high school has greatly expanded its curriculum to meet 'practical' needs of those who intend to remain on the farm or in the small town. Vocational agriculture, domestic science, music, and commercial subjects are now [in 1954] quite common. The Millington, Michigan, high school girls in 1936 received a twelve weeks' course in child care under the direction of a registered state nurse, and boys enrolled in vocational agriculture in the same school carried on supervised and practical farm projects throughout the year (Atherton 1984:301).

Social and Psychological Training

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the role of public schools was expanding to include broader social concerns. Particularly in cities, where poverty, crime, and crowded living conditions were prevalent, schools incorporated social service programs for the first time. Most of these broader social programs and amenities eventually spread to schools in small towns like Morris. Joel Spring writes,

> The American educational system changed by taking on broader social and economic functions. In urban areas, schools expanded their social functions by adding school nurses and health programs, introducing showers, providing after-school and community activities, and attaching playgrounds to school buildings. Educators tried to change the school curriculum to solve the perceived social problems caused by the loss of the values of a small-town, rural society.
>
> Nurses, health facilities, and showers were added to schools in order to control the spread of disease, and special instructional programs were introduced to educate children about

> sanitary conditions. Americanization programs were offered as a means of assimilating children of immigrants into American life and preventing the spread of radical ideologies. Playgrounds were attached to schools to provide after-school activities for children that, it was hoped, would reduce juvenile delinquency. To curb the sense of alienation caused by urban living, auditoriums and special facilities for adults were provided by schools to serve as centers for community activities (Spring 1994:188, 189-190).

While the city had challenges such as crime, poverty, and over-crowding, rural areas had their own set of social problems that some believed the public schools had the potential to solve. Among the most well known of the groups addressing this issue was the Country Life Commission (1908-1911), which had been convened by President Theodore Roosevelt to analyze social conditions in rural areas. The Commission found that rural areas were being depopulated, in part because of poor education (particularly in one-room schools), social isolation, poor infrastructure including roads and communication, lack of good leadership, and burdensome roles for women. Among the Commission's strongest recommendations was the nationwide consolidation of rural schools. Other recommendations included the establishment of the county-based agricultural extension service, improved roads, better rural mail delivery, and more vocational agriculture and home economics training in high schools.

The Country Life Movement, as it is called, generated national interest in improving rural and small town schools. One-room schools were closed and consolidated with town schools, funding increased, teacher training improved, vocational and home economics training were added, extra-curricular activities were enhanced, and social programs were instituted.

Extra-curricular activities, an ensconced part of the modern public school, were instituted during the early 20th century as a way to make schools more effective at socializing students. In the words of Joel Spring,

> The modern high school also embodied a greater concern with the social development of youth [than had its predecessors]. In concrete terms, this meant the addition of high school activities such as clubs, student government, assemblies, organized athletics, and social events. . . . It was through these activities that American youth were to learn how to cooperate in an industrial society based on large-scale corporations and unions" (Spring 1994:213).

Extracurricular activities were seen as a way to build social unity within schools. They were first introduced into public schools in the late 19th century, but during the 1920s they developed "into an educational cult," according to Spring (Spring 1994:222). Student government, student newspapers, various clubs, and athletic teams were thought to teach cooperation, coordination, and the ability to forgo individual reward and work toward a common purpose -- all attributes needed in a modern corporate or business (rather than agrarian) society (Spring 1994:224). Beginning in the 1920s, the school assembly, school songs, a school newspaper, and similar elements were increasingly emphasized as ways to foster unity (Spring 1994:224-225).

The same extracurricular activities that were instituted nationwide were established in Morris. Because the Morris High School yearbook was not established until 1937, less is known about such activities in the 1910s and 1920s. However, a 1938 list of activities includes many that are still in existence today. The 1938 yearbook includes references to the student newspaper (the *Tinta Wasota*), declamation, a prom dance, choral groups (glee club, mixed chorus, and *a capella* choir), instrumental groups (concert band, orchestra, quartets, and "pep" band), student government, junior and senior class drama productions, an operetta, a drama club, a journalism club, a school carnival, "Homecoming," cheerleaders, "Juvenile Jester," and "Pep Squad" (*Iwakta* 1938).

Architecture

The 1914-1915 Morris High School is also a good representative example of trends in school design associated with the Progressive Era. Earlier schools of the late 19th century and the first decade of the 20th century often resembled county courthouses of the period with a vertical design emphasis, towers or turrets, and tall and narrow windows that were spaced far apart. They often had three stories that were reached by a single interior stairway.

Schools built in the Midwest after about 1905, like the Morris High School, usually had designs that were less imposing than those of earlier schools, had more simple massing, had multiple stairways for fire safety (the Morris School has a stairway at each end of each floor of classrooms), and had large banks of double-hung windows designed to improve lighting conditions in classrooms and provide good ventilation. Early photographs of schools built in Minnesota communities in the 1910s and 1920s reveal many that share design characteristics with the Morris High School (MHS Historic Photos).

The Morris High School was typical, but not at the vanguard of school design. The new school completed in 1915 still had desks that were apparently bolted to the floors rather than being movable and flat-topped as was being promoted in the 1910s in some large city schools (Spring 1994:198-199). Movable, flat-topped desks were intended to promote more active learning, rather than merely lectures and recitation, and were conducive to the use of classrooms by extra-curricular clubs and community groups (Spring 1994:195-196). The Morris High School also had an assembly room on the upper floor when it opened in 1915. The most progressive schools of the time (again in large cities) were being built with assembly rooms on the first floor where they were more accessible to the community and offered faster escape in case of fire. It would also be many years -- until 1956 -- before the Morris school had a large public lobby with space to display artwork and other exhibits, another Progressive idea.

1934 Wing

After hitting a high point in 1928, the number of public schools constructed in the United States fell dramatically during the early part of the Depression. In 1933-1934, for example,

expenditures on public school facilities nationwide were one-sixth of what they had been in 1927-1928. Thanks in part to New Deal programs, school construction projects resumed during the mid-1930s, with the most construction occurring in 1939-1940 (Stiles et al 1962:349-353).

During the Depression the Morris school board took advantage of federal funding under President F. D. Roosevelt's New Deal to make substantial physical improvements to district facilities that otherwise may not have occurred for many years. In 1933-1934 New Deal funding was used to replace Longfellow School (built 1885) on the West Side, add a combined auditorium and gymnasium to the high school, and landscape both new structures. In 1940-1941 New Deal funding helped add modern athletic facilities to the high school and make repairs and upgrades to the high school interior.

The Depression-era improvements coincide with a broadening of the high school's educational and co-curricular offerings. They coincided with the consolidation of all West and East Side high school students into the Morris High School building. They also coincide with increases in school enrollment, while not as dramatic as would be experienced after World War II. The farm economy had been depressed through much of the 1920s, and Morris's population had only grown by 150 people between 1920 and 1930. Many of Stevens County's rural one-room schools had not yet consolidated. In fact, in the 1930s the Works Progress Administration built a new stone schoolhouse for rural School District 33, just east of Morris (Busch 1976).

On the other hand, increasing numbers of children, both in town and on the farm, were attending school beyond the eighth grade. More farm children were attending Morris High School after graduating from eighth grade at "country school."

Early in the 1933-1934 building project, eight architects met with the Morris school board in August 1933. Board members selected three firms for further consideration. They were Jacobson and Jacobson, Louis Pinault, and Sund and Dunham (Minutes, Aug. 31, 1933). A delegation of board members and the superintendent then visited some of the buildings designed by each firm, traveling to Benson, Starbuck, Elbow Lake, and St. Paul. At the September 7, 1933, school board meeting, Sund and Dunham was selected on a unanimous vote.

In January 1934 the school board accepted A. B. Dunham's plans for a new 6-classroom Longfellow School and an auditorium-gymnasium wing for the high school. It was planned that bids would be let in February and construction would begin in March. The *Morris Tribune* reported:

> The building program calls for the razing of the present Longfellow grade school on the West Side and the construction of a new building on that site at a cost of approximately $42,000. The second building will be an addition to the high school plant on the East Side and will cost $38,000. To cover this $80,000 construction program the school district early last fall voted a bond issue of $55,000 with the understanding that the major portion of the balance of the cost would come from the federal government under its public works offer

granting 30 per cent of the cost of such a project as an employment relief measure. Formal approval of the grant was received from the Public Works Administration some time ago ("Board Accepts" 1934).

The two-building project was funded by two school bond issues and a $26,700 grant from the Public Works Administration (PWA), a federal Depression-relief program designed to stimulate the economy by funding public building projects that would be built by local contractors.

The two projects were bid together, and construction bids were opened in February 1934. Eleven bids had been submitted for the general construction contract, 10 for plumbing and heating, and 9 for the electrical work. Carl Swedberg of Wheaton was awarded the general construction contract for $63,000 for both buildings. Reuben L. Anderson of St. Paul was awarded the plumbing and heating contract, and Grosse Brothers of St. Cloud was awarded the electrical contract.

Based on the bids, the school board realized that the building project would fall about $15,000 short of revenues and decided to ask for an additional bond issue to make up the difference. On March 6, 1934, the public voted three to one in favor of more money for Longfellow and two to one in favor of more funds for the auditorium-gym. A total of 365 ballots were cast ("Special Election" 1934; "Additional Bonds" 1934).

The two structures were built simultaneously but construction of Longfellow was given priority so that grade school classes could get underway in the new building in September 1934 ("Public Schools" 1934). Construction of the auditorium-gym continued during the early fall of 1934, and the contractor was given extensions in October and November to complete the work.

In October 1934, as the work was finishing, the school district received a State Emergency Relief Administration (SERA) grant of $5,564 to landscape the grounds of the two new structures. The work would be done by unemployed Stevens County men who had registered at the local SERA office and who would be paid with SERA funds ("Application For" 1934). Board minutes note that Mr. H. H. Wells of Morris allowed the district use of his teams to grade the Longfellow grounds (Minutes, Dec. 5, 1934).

The first public event in the new Morris High School gymnasium was a basketball game between Morris and Wheaton held on December 7, 1934. According to the *Morris Tribune*, "Wheaton was scheduled for the opening game here at the request of Carl Swedberg, the contractor who built the new gymnasium and new grade school here. Mr. Swedberg is the president of the school board in his home town of Wheaton and he especially desired that the team from his home town school be privileged to be the first to play Morris in the new gymnasium" ("Opening Basketball" 1934).

In December 1934 the *Morris Tribune* boasted that: "The auditorium-gymnasium is one of the outstanding structures of its kinds in this section of the state. . .[It] is beautifully and completely

finished throughout the interior, and is unusually attractive in appearance on the outside" ("Morris' New" 1934). Soon after the wing was completed, St. Mary's School was granted use of the gymnasium to practice and play basketball.

The auditorium-gymnasium was well received by the state Department of Education. In a November 27, 1936, letter, H. E. Flynn, Director of High Schools, commended the board and community for the new facility: "Now, may I tell you that the school is well-organized, properly taught, ably supervised, and competently administered. The school conditions at Morris continue to make improvements" (Minutes, Nov. 27, 1936). Members of the school board also reflected on the improvements in a commendation letter for Superintendent L. G. Mustain, stating that "the public schools of Morris have expanded not only in material wealth, manifested by new buildings and equipment, but also a steady strengthening of the teacher personnel and enrichment of courses" (Minutes, Nov. 9, 1937).

1940-1941 Improvements

A few years after the 1934 wing was completed, the school was again the beneficiary of federal Depression-relief funds. This project tripled the size of the school property, created a handsome athletic stadium, and repaired and upgraded the high school. The need for athletic fields had been under discussion for about 10 years.

The project was financed in part with a bond issue that was approved by voters on April 8, 1940. The bond referendum included two questions: whether to issue $18,000 in bonds for athletic fields, and whether to issue another $12,000 in bonds for remodeling and repairing the high school and purchasing some new equipment. The question of the athletic fields was approved on a vote of 117 to 47, and the building improvements passed on a vote of 121 to 37.

The referendum allowed the district to acquire 12 acres of land east of the high school. The property was purchased from Mr. and Mrs. Henry Hartog for $5,000 after several months of negotiations, including the school district publishing its intent to acquire the land through the right of eminent domain. The land was bounded on the south by Fifth Street and on the east by College Avenue and, when added to the school's existing parcel, brought the total school property to nearly 18 acres.

In January of 1940 the school board hired Frank W. Jackson, a prominent St. Cloud architect, to design the athletic fields (and presumably also the improvements to the building). Jackson had recently completed the design of the Selke Field stadium at the State Normal School at St. Cloud (now St. Cloud State University), which may have inspired the school board to choose him as the architect.

Jackson's design transformed the alfalfa fields east of the school to an attractive bowl-like football stadium with a running track, tennis court, baseball diamonds, and other athletic fields. The Great Northern Railroad donated cinder to surface the track, and high school boys helped

haul the cinder from the railroad tracks to the school as part of their physical education classes (Minutes, Nov. 25, 1942).

The repairs and remodeling at the high school included upgrading the plumbing, electrical, and mechanical systems, installing an incinerator, expanding the locker rooms, and purchasing new equipment.

Labor for both the school remodeling and the athletic field construction was provided by a Work Projects Administration (WPA) grant which the school district received in 1940. The WPA workers were presumably unemployed Stevens County men who had registered at the local unemployment office and were then certified to receive the Depression-relief WPA wages. Construction of the field was completed by July 1941, and school board members voted at their July 9, 1942, meeting to pay final bills for the project. Board members were quite pleased with the work of WPA foreman Lem McAllister. In the fall of 1941, board members directed the superintendent to write a letter of commendation to McAllister indicating that "the Board recognizes the efforts of Mr. McAllister to secure the maximum results with least possible expenses for labor and cost to the school district for materials and wish to express our appreciation to him for his cooperation" (Minutes, Nov. 25, 1941).

Although the school board had plans to light the football field, the lights were not purchased because of insufficient funds. Floodlights were added to the field in 1947 after they were financed by the Morris Civic and Commerce Committee. The district paid back the funds with receipts from football games ("1940 Purchase" 1950).

High School Physical Education and Athletics

The acquisition and development of the athletic fields at the Morris High School marked a vast improvement in the high school's athletic facilities. They are associated with the rising importance of athletics and physical education in small-town, American public schools beginning around the 1930s. The Morris High School added its athletic fields at the same time that many small-town high schools in the Midwest were doing so, and the fields are typical in size and scope to those attached to other small-town high schools.

It is not clear when varsity athletics were established at the Morris High School. During the early years of the high school football program, the team had been playing at a field located behind the Great Northern Depot in Morris (Busch 1976). During the summer of 1929, the school board purchased three acres of land adjacent to the northern side of the high school for athletic fields. Before the sale the *Morris Sun* reported: "the land is of sufficient size and of the right shape to permit laying out both baseball and football fields" ("May Purchase" 1929). The land was bought from D. H. Hartog for $1500. It is unclear whether a formal football field was actually built here, however. In April 1930, several school board meetings were held to discuss the proposed athletic fields and board members paid $75 for blueprints to be drawn. However, on April 22 "the matter of grading the football field was laid on the table" (Minutes, April 22,

1930). Several months later, in September of 1930, the board again voted to table the matter until the spring of 1931. In the meantime, the school's industrial arts class constructed a fence along the new property line, separating the school grounds from the remainder of Hartog's farmland.

No further mention of work on an athletic field was found in the school board minutes through the 1930s. In 1931, the West Central School of Agriculture (WCSA), which was located two blocks east of the high school, built a new gymnasium and football field. The Morris High School played football games there during the 1930s, perhaps enabling the district to postpone construction of its own field. The WCSA field was apparently being used by the high school immediately before the construction of the high school's current athletic fields in 1940-1941 (*Iwakta* 1938, 1939, 1940).

Physical education training had been introduced into public schools long before organized games or athletics. In the late 19th century in large cities the benefits of physical education were being promoted by some educators as well as private groups in large cities such as the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), which had begun to build gymnasiums for poor children. By the late 19th century, a few states were requiring that physical education be taught in public schools, but there were relatively few school gymnasiums. Like many educational reforms, physical education was at first more prevalent in large urban schools than in smaller towns.

Most physical education training at first consisted of group calisthenics. It was about 1910, just before the Morris High School was built, that sports, rather than calisthenics, became "generally accepted by school authorities as a legitimate part of the school program," although some physical educators "had been quietly including them [sports and games] in their class-hour activities for some time previous to this date" (Rice et al 1958:284). By 1950 sports and games had eclipsed calisthenics in physical education classes nationwide.

In addition to physical education training, younger students also played outside during recess periods. Structured playgrounds appeared in the United States in the late 19th century as they slowly began to be introduced into urban parks. Progressives saw public playgrounds, including those at schools, as a way to promote the general health of a community, as well as a venue for recreation and social activity.

During American involvement in World War I (1914-1918), interest in physical education increased nationwide, both because of national "preparedness" and because troops played sports for leisure during their service. In the late 1910s and 1920s increasing numbers of states required that physical education be taught in school. In the 1920s the National Education Association was urging all schools to establish a gymnasium. Minnesota's state department of education established a state director of physical education in 1923. In Minnesota schools there was substantial growth in physical education in the 1920s -- Minnesota had 171 physical education teachers in 1924 (108 full-time and 63 part-time), but more than five times that many,

or 999 physical education teachers, by 1930 (301 full-time and 698 part-time) (Rice et al 1958:297).

It appears that the Morris High School, with its original 1914-1915 gymnasium, its 1934 gymnasium, and its 1956 elementary school gymnasium may have been ahead of the curve nationwide in providing gymnasiums. A 1958 history of physical education reports that in 1956 less than 50 percent of all high school boys and girls nationwide were receiving physical education training, that 91 percent of the 150,000 elementary schools in the United States had no gymnasiums, and that 90 percent of the nation's elementary schools had less than the five acres for playing -- the minimum amount recommended by educators in 1930 (Rice et al 1958:361).

During the 1910s and 1920s competitive games or sports became increasingly more organized nationwide and were introduced into high schools. The earliest school teams were informal and sometimes included adult school staff. Like many elements of high school culture, sports programs were modeled after those in universities where intercollegiate sports were first played in the 1870s and 1880s. In 1954 Lewis Atherton wrote of small town high schools, "Organized athletics have made a phenomenal growth in the twentieth century in every way except perhaps in partisanship, which ran to extremes from the first. Small colleges in rural towns throughout the Midwest provided immediate and perhaps unfortunate examples for high school athletes" (Atherton 1954/1984:302).

By 1916, high school sports in Minnesota were sufficiently popular to support the organization of the Minnesota State High School League (first known as the State High School Athletic Association) which established uniform rules for interscholastic contests. Morris school board minutes indicate that the local school district was paying annual dues to the association by at least 1921. The popularity of high school sports such as football, baseball, and track and field steadily increased in the 1920s as rules were standardized and the first national championships in certain sports were held. Babe Ruth's 60 home runs in 1927 greatly increased interest in baseball.

World War II also increased American's interest in athletics, again as a means of ensuring physical preparedness and because troops played sports for leisure. By 1950, high school athletics were flourishing and formed the basis for many high school extracurricular activities. Lewis Atherton could have been describing Morris when he described 1948 football "Homecoming" celebrations in small Midwestern towns with nearly the same school traditions:

> Algona [Iowa] had a homecoming queen, a marching band, and an address of welcome by the president of the student council. Rockville [Indiana] staged a bonfire and a snake dance on Thursday night preceding the big event. On Friday night the school band headed a parade around the public square, through the park and on to the playing field, where the home team lost under the lights to Cayuga, 31 to 6. Even defeat did not destroy interest in the crowning of the queen and her attendants at half-time, or in the homecoming dance that followed the game. School classes, Rotary, Hi-Y, and Y-teens entered floats in the parade

preceding the game, an indication of the extent of local interest even in a mediocre season (Atherton 1954/1984:303-304).

Educational, Social, and Cultural Role

Historically public schools have been extremely important in American society, ranking along with the family, the workplace, and the church as fundamental institutions with broad impact on ordinary people's lives. Because public schools have always required significant local taxes to operate, because they have been governed by local boards, and because they educate virtually all children, the populace has often been passionate about what public schools teach and how they are administered.

In small towns like Morris, the role of public schools may historically have been even more important because of the scarcity of resources. Most small towns offered limited opportunities for cultural exploration, exposure to the fine arts, and adult education. As a consequence, performances, convocations, classes, and events held at public schools were social and cultural highlights, particularly before television became prevalent in the 1950s.

In Morris, the high school played a central social and cultural role in the community. School activities such as plays, debates, musical performances, sporting events, and graduation ceremonies were principal events in the town. A multitude of school and non-school classes, clubs, recreational events, meetings, and other activities frequently drew adults and children to the school's classrooms, gymnasiums, auditorium, and playgrounds. After the auditorium-gymnasium was built in 1934, the high school became a preferred location for cultural events and often played the role of municipal auditorium or opera house. While the Morris Armory, built in 1920, was used for many large public gatherings and civic functions, it did not have the school auditorium's banked seating (at the armory chairs had to be set up on the floor of the drill hall) or a proper stage with a proscenium arch (the armory had only a small stage at one end of the hall).

Public schools in small towns also helped define and unify communities. Two historians -- Lewis Atherton, who studied Midwestern towns in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and Thomas Harvey, who wrote about small towns in Minnesota -- point out that a small town might have five or six churches to divide allegiances, but only one school, which tended to unite people (Atherton 1954/1984:265; Harvey 1989:119).

Harvey quotes a 1969 sociological study of Benson (30 miles from Morris) which states that, not only is the public school a major employer in the town, but it exerts "a major shaping influence on the life of the community. In the fall, on Friday nights, when stores are open for shopping in town, the school plays its home football games to large audiences. . . . Even those who have no children or who are older follow school events" (Harvey 1989:119).

Historian Clarke Chambers, in a 1989 essay on education in Minnesota in the early- to mid-20th century, states, "Whether times were prosperous or depressed, community morale in rural Minnesota depended heavily on popular perceptions of how well the school was doing" (Chambers 1989:483).

Thomas Harvey also demonstrates the social and cultural importance of local public schools by citing the "emotional blow of the loss of community identity" experienced by Minnesota's smallest towns following the permanent closing of their public schools (Harvey 1989:120).

1949-1950 Wing

The Morris High School's 1949-1950 and 1956 wings are directly associated with two broad movements in history: the consolidation of rural school districts and a population increase known as the post-World War II "baby boom." Both were significant events in the history of public education statewide and important turning points socially and culturally for rural Minnesotans.

Rural School Consolidation

The same Country Life Commission (1908-1911) that had encouraged many of the social reforms described above strongly advocated the consolidation of the nation's one-teacher, one-room rural schools, each of which usually comprised a separate school district. Most of these schools taught grades 1-8 in a single classroom. The Commission and those that agreed with its findings found rural one-room schools to be too small, too independent, and too short of resources -- including professionally trained teachers -- to effectively prepare children for successful lives in complex communities.

Rural school consolidation, which had considerable impact on the development of the Morris High School, was strongly influenced by the development of the automobile and the school bus. Historian Thomas Morain explains that, even before the advent of rural school busing, automobiles allowed farm children to commute to high school each day, thereby attending school beyond the eighth grade. Some parents with a high school student also began to send their sixth, seventh, or eighth grade children into town so that they could become adjusted to the town school and partake in expanded activities. Morain also explains that by expanding physical horizons, the automobile led many people to believe that "a one-room school was no longer adequate preparation for a child. . . . Parochialism was breaking down, bringing with it a dissatisfaction with the system of numerous, small one-room schools" (Morain 1988:136-137). Morain indicates that automobiles also increased attendance at extra-curricular activities and sporting events among all high school students, whether they lived on the farm or in town.

In Morris, it is not clear when school busing began, and routes may have been slowly created as groups of children from country schools expressed interest in traveling to Morris. One of the earliest buses picked up children from a country school in Darnen Township, which is south of

Morris (Busch 1976). Some of the first buses were privately-owned "touring" cars with extra seats whose owners acted as bus drivers under contract with the district. By the 1940s busing in Morris was well established.

Nationwide, school districts consolidated from about 127,000 districts in 1927, to about 114,000 in 1940, to about 40,000 in 1959. By the 1960s there were wide differences between the states in the number of school districts, ranging from one school district in Hawaii in 1967 to over 2,000 in Nebraska in the same year. Consolidation was slower in the Midwest, and by 1968 Midwestern states accounted for nearly 40% of the total number of school districts in the country (Dieter 1976).

The Minnesota legislature first authorized consolidated school districts in 1911 and offered financial incentives to encourage them (Blegen 1963/1975:412). The legislature began to pass bills to encourage consolidation of rural districts in earnest after World War II. In 1949, the legislature began to pay for tuition and transportation for seventh and eighth grade students in rural districts so they could attend school in a nearby town.

In 1950 Minnesota had the fifth-largest number of one-room schools -- 4,421. Only Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, and Wisconsin had more of them (Knight 1952:315). The legislature finally made consolidation mandatory statewide in 1963, and by 1981 the number of school districts in the state had dropped to under 500.

Stevens County had a total of 71 school districts in the early 20th century. Most consisted of one- or two-room schools attended by nearby farm children. As the country schools began to close, most children were bussed to either Morris or one of the county's smaller towns -- Alberta, Chokio, Donnelly, or Hancock. Sometimes there was competition between towns to attract students. For example, as early as 1920 children in Donnelly could ride a bus to Morris. By 1930, the Alberta school district was also sending a bus to Donnelly to bring students to their school. The arrangement was discontinued following a dispute between the two school systems over the bus routes. In 1948, the Morris school district was still the same size as it had been in 1872, so formal consolidation had not yet begun. By 1950, the Donnelly school district had consolidated with Morris (Busch 1976).

The Morris school board was also actively seeking to become the foremost high school in the area. In March 1943 during World War II, the school board sent a letter to the Cyrus board inviting them to send ninth through twelfth graders to Morris. Cyrus is located seven miles east of Morris, in Pope County. The letter read, "In times like these a goodly number of the smaller high schools are going to find it most difficult to employ teachers that will furnish a well rounded faculty. Already several superintendents have stated that this crisis will compel them to do one of two things, either close school entirely and transport or continue with greatly restricted faculties or faculties below normal. In the face of this situation we, the school board of Independent School District No. 1 of Morris, wish to extend an invitation for you to consider transporting your high school pupils to Morris during this emergency or as long as you see fit"

(Minutes, March 19, 1943). It is not known how the Cyrus school board reacted to this invitation, but Cyrus continued its high school. Some 40 years later when the Cyrus High School closed, the school board voted to bus the seventh through twelfth graders to Morris.

Other efforts to attract students included an annual visitation day at the Morris High School for students from rural districts. In the spring of 1950, for example, the *Morris Tribune* reported that "approximately 60 sixth, seventh and eighth grade students from 13 rural districts in the Morris high school area will be guests of the high school this Thursday for an all-day schedule of activities and programs designed to acquaint them with the local school. . . . The rural pupils are being invited to spend the day at Morris high school said Supt. Frank J. Fox, since it is the high school in which they may be interested in attending as students" ("60 Youngsters" 1950). Fox also published additional information later that summer regarding the 1949 state law providing tuition and transportation aid for rural seventh and eighth graders, and urging parents to contact the Morris high school for full details.

The "Baby Boom"

The Morris school district experienced unprecedented enrollment during the 1940s through the early 1960s. During the years 1946-1964, dubbed the "baby boom," 76 million American babies were born. World War II had delayed marriages and the start of families, and this demand, combined with post-war American prosperity, created the boom. Births in the United States had been steady at about 2.75 million per year during 1910-1930 and had declined during the Depression to about 2.5 million per year during 1931-1940. In 1940, however, the trend reversed. Births rose to over 3 million in 1943, 3.5 million in 1947, over 4 million in 1954, and peaked at 4.3 million in 1957. (Births in the United States then declined to 4 million in 1964 and to 3.1 million in 1974.)

During the "baby boom" there was also general population growth within Morris. The city grew from 2,474 people in 1930 to 3,214 people in 1940, and reached 3,811 people in 1950.

An overall increase in the number of young children, plus ongoing school consolidation, put tremendous pressure on the resources of the school system. For example, enrollment in the spring of 1948 was 651 students -- yet Longfellow School and the high school could only accommodate about 510. Enrollment in the Morris district was 663 in the fall of 1948, 676 in September 1949, and 819 in September 1950 ("Here's The Story" 1950). Former principal Wally Behm recalls that in Morris in the 1950s there were over 125 students in each grade and as high as 150 or more in some grades. This meant 35 or more students were assigned to classrooms designed to hold 25 students (Behm 2003).

The "baby boom" years were also a time of severe teacher shortages. In 1947, for example, it was reported that 350,000 teachers had left public schools during the years 1940-1946 (primarily due to World War II), 125,000 teachers (one in seven) were serving with emergency or substandard certification, 70,000 teaching positions were unfilled due to lack of candidates, and

60,000 teachers had only a high school education or less (Knight 1952:251). Military service, low salaries, and the opportunity to work at higher-paying war-related jobs accounted for shortages in the 1940s and early 1950s.

The need for teachers was especially critical in rural areas where salaries were even lower and where local social conventions often resulted in restrictive rules about teachers' behavior and personal lives (Knight 1952:252, 314; Atherton 1954/1984:265; Morain 1988:158). In the early 20th century teachers in Morris could go sleigh riding, ice skating, or attend taffy pulls. But card playing and dancing were not allowed (Busch 1976). The Morris school board unanimously passed a resolution in June of 1930 opposed "to having married women teachers in our schools as regular teachers" (Minutes, June 10, 1930). In 1942-1943 the district's salary schedule included an extra $100 per year for married men (above that paid to other teachers) and another $25 to $150 annually if the married male teacher had children (Minutes, Nov. 25, 1942).

American public schools experienced a shortage of classrooms during the "baby boom" period. By the early 1940s there was a nationwide shortage of schools that had accumulated over many years and would not be solved for many more. School construction, like all non-defense construction, had stopped during World War II, and the preceding years of the Depression had also delayed capital improvements. In 1950, when Morris's 1949-1950 wing was being completed, at least 250,000 children attended school only part-time due to classroom shortages, 1 million children were in temporary or obsolete buildings, and 4 million were in over-crowded classrooms (Knight 1952:252). One educational historian writes, "In more than half the states, shortages in buildings for urban elementary schools were reported to be very large, and in about one fourth of the states the shortages in elementary school buildings in rural communities were large" (Knight 1952:252). In Morris classes were held in the Morris Armory and in other buildings such as the First Lutheran Church during several periods through the 1960s to relieve shortages.

Construction

In April 1948, the school board proposed a $300,000 bond issue to expand the overcrowded Morris High School. That month the project was discussed at the quarterly meeting of the Morris Civic and Commerce Association, which was open to the public. The meeting was well-attended by school district and county residents who came to discuss both the proposed school enlargement and continuing plans for a new county hospital. By the time of the school bond election in May 1948, 16 local organizations had endorsed and promoted the school project. These supporting organizations included civic, community, church, and fraternal groups.

The *Morris Tribune* reported that enlarging the high school was a necessity:

> The need for additional facilities to accommodate a steadily increasing student enrollment in the local schools has become more and more pressing each year for a number of years. It has now reached the critical stage where steps must be taken next year to find quarters

outside the school buildings for one or two grades. Faced with this situation and the knowledge that the enrollment will continue to increase by leaps and bounds for a number of years to come the Board of Education decided it could delay no longer in calling an election to provide funds for building purposes ("School District" 1948).

Voters approved the bond issue, 660 to 89, at a special election held May 4, 1948. The *Morris Tribune* reported, "The very decisive margin given the proposed bond issue is believed to be one of the largest ever accorded a question of similar importance, or involving a comparable amount of money by voters of this community. The vote has been described as an outstanding example of community recognition of a responsibility and of its willingness to shoulder that responsibility" ("District Approved" 1948).

The district hired the architectural firm of Pass and Rockey of Mankato in July 1948. Architect George W. Pass, Jr., was the lead designer. G. C. Torgerson of Morris was hired as the resident construction superintendent and G. M. Orr of Minneapolis was consulting engineer. George Madsen of Minneapolis was awarded the general construction contract at the beginning of June 1949, and two weeks later excavation began. The *Morris Tribune* reported, "Much of the dirt which is being taken from the northwest end of the high school building, where the new classroom addition will be erected, is being hauled to the embankment on the northeast side of the gymnasium-auditorium structure, widening this embankment in preparation for the enlargement of the gymnasium as another phase of the building project" ("Work Started" 1949). The newspaper also reported that several large evergreen trees at the northern end of the high school were transplanted elsewhere on the school property to salvage them.

The 1949-1950 wing created six high school classrooms on the second floor, six grade school classrooms on the first floor, and space for kindergarten classes on the ground level. The ground level also had a large industrial arts shop and a cafeteria and kitchen. Among the educational innovations included were electrical conduits so that radios or loudspeakers could be installed in each classroom, and green chalkboards, which were believed to cause less eyestrain than traditional black chalkboards. The wing was completed in September of 1950.

The project also included a 26' addition to the rear of the high school auditorium-gymnasium, which was completed early in 1950. The addition provided bleacher seating for 450 fans and a band room in the basement. Prior to the addition, basketball fans sat in the auditorium seats, some of which were below the level of the court.

The new wing was dedicated on September 8, 1950, at a program in which State Auditor Stafford King was the principal speaker.

The school term began in September 1950 with an all-time record enrollment of 819 students. As had been done for past school expansions, the *Morris Tribune* included a series of photographs and feature articles about the new wing. A front-page article reported, "Despite the sizeable increase in the number of students, the throng of boys and girls is being easily

accommodated in the schools thanks to the new grade-high school addition which is being used for the first time this year" ("Public Schools" 1950).

The 1949-1950 wing was built at a time when post-war prosperity and population increases brought other new construction to Morris. Several businesses and institutions were able to make physical improvements that had been postponed during the long Depression and war. The same issue of the *Tribune* that included details of the new school also carried several photographs of other buildings under construction, including a $550,000 modern brick hospital, the Stevens County Memorial Hospital, a $125,000 addition to the WCSA's Agriculture Hall, and several new homes.

Kindergarten and Hot Lunch

The construction of the 1949-1950 wing on the Morris High School enabled the Morris public school to introduce two significant educational advances that had not been previously available: full-term kindergarten and a hot lunch program.

The establishment of kindergarten in Morris is associated with the widespread, nationwide acceptance of the educational and social value of kindergarten programs, and with the spread of kindergartens from large cities to rural areas.

The first public kindergarten in the United States began in 1873 in St. Louis, 20 years after it had been developed in Europe and introduced in American private schools. A few teacher-training schools added kindergarten departments by 1880. Between 1900 and 1930 the number of public kindergartens increased steadily nationwide, although they were usually in large cities. By 1928 about 44 states had some form of state-supported kindergartens and about 27 percent of the nation's 4- and 5-year-olds were enrolled. Enrollment in public kindergartens declined during the Depression when funding shortages killed many programs. These declines were somewhat mitigated by New Deal programs such as the Works Progress Administration that operated kindergartens and other early childhood education programs.

Proponents of kindergartens believed the programs helped assimilate non-English speaking immigrant children, helped educate and socialize the poor, and assisted poor mothers who had to work. By the 1940s educators had clearly demonstrated that children who attended kindergarten were more alert and observant, followed directions better, were more cooperative, were more well-behaved in the classroom, and were more academically prepared for the first grade (Cuban 1992). Until after World War II most kindergartens were located in large cities where their social benefits were thought to be most needed.

During the mid-1940s, kindergartens spread from cities to rural areas. A major factor was the widespread acceptance that kindergarten was valuable for all children, not just the urban poor. The spread of kindergartens was also influenced by a national emphasis on standardizing public education so that urban and rural children had similar curricula and programs. Public support for

kindergartens also increased during World War II when many were established to allow mothers to work in defense industries.

Minutes from the Morris school board meetings reveal that board members discussed establishing kindergarten in the spring of 1935 and in the spring of 1937, but no classes were formed. Minutes from a meeting on March 2, 1938, state that "a delegation of West Side Ladies appeared before the Board -- Mrs. Zeches, Mrs. Wenberg, Mrs. Clark, Mrs. Ederer, Mrs. Cummings, Mrs. J. Stong -- their interest being in a full time kindergarten or spring primary class. Their wish was for a class on both the East and West side of town, with a full time teacher" (Minutes, Feb. 8, 1938). The board then established a short-term kindergarten class that was held in the spring (perhaps intermittently) from approximately 1938-1950. The class was typically offered during the last six to eight weeks of the school term.

In January of 1950, the school board decided to put the question of operating a full-term kindergarten to the voters. The issue would be included in the annual school board election in May. The *Morris Tribune* reported that there was strong community interest in the issue: "A larger turnout of voters than marks most school elections is expected for the annual election next Tuesday evening. Two factors will likely contribute to the looked for larger turnout. The first of these is the fact that voters will be asked to decide whether or not a full time kindergarten department shall be established in the local school system beginning next September" ("Larger Vote" 1950). The issue was narrowly approved in one of the largest local school elections in recent years. The election results were published in the *Tribune*:

> By the comparatively narrow margin of 26 votes a full time kindergarten in the Morris public schools was approved by district voters at the annual election Tuesday evening. The vote was 266 in favor of the full term kindergarten and 240 in opposition to it. . . . The combination of the kindergarten question and the . . . contest for a board position resulted in a total of 523 votes being cast in the two-hour election. This was by far the largest number of votes cast at a regular school election in any year since 1945. So unexpectedly large was the turnout that a rush order for additional ballots went to the printers during the course of the voting when it became apparent that the 500 originally ordered might not be sufficient. . . . The full term kindergarten authorized by the voters beginning next September will be a marked departure from the six to eight week kindergarten terms which have been held each spring for a number of years past. The full term kindergarten will be possible because of the new school building just being completed with its special kindergarten room ("Full Term Kindergarten" 1950).

The expanded kindergarten program finally began in September 1950, and was termed a "new venture" in the district by the *Morris Tribune*. Two classes were organized, one to meet during the morning and one in the afternoon. The *Tribune* reported that the teacher would be Miss Ingrid Mohr of St. Paul ("Kindergarten" 1950).

When full-term kindergarten was added to the public school in Morris, it was becoming institutionally accepted nearly everywhere. In 1949-1950, 1.03 million children were enrolled in public kindergartens nationwide, a number that still represented only about 35 percent of the nation's 5-year-olds, however. By the mid-1950s, kindergarten had become so integrated that the standard designation for a public elementary school became "K-6", rather than "1-6".

The 1949-1950 school wing also provided the Morris High School with its first modern cafeteria -- a facility with enough space to prepare a hot, balanced meal for the entire student body. The *Morris Tribune* reported news of the cafeteria in August 1950, heralding its modern service. "Mrs. Christ Troelson and Mrs. Harry Ernest have been employed as cooks in the cafeteria, which will begin operation the opening day of school. The type of lunches offered will generally include a glass of milk, bread with various spreads, a hot dish, and often a side dish of custard or fruit. The charge for lunch will be 20 cents" ("Kindergarten" 1950). Research in school board minutes indicate that this was the first time that cooks had been hired by the school. Students attending Longfellow also benefited from this new venture. Hot meals, prepared in the new kitchen, were transported to the Longfellow building by a bus driver, and served in the gymnasium. However, on some blustery winter days, the lunch was not necessarily hot by the time students were eating (Behm 2003). (During later years, including the early 1960s, the school district arranged to use the nearby Federated Church's kitchen and dining room to serve hot lunch to Longfellow students.)

When the Morris High School was first built in 1915, the building included a small lunch room in which lunches could be served, according to a 1915 article in the *Morris Tribune*: "By the establishment of the cafeteria, the cold noon lunch is relegated to take its place among the things of long ago. A pupil will be able during these cold winter days to get a glass of warm milk or hot cocoa for three cents and a bowl of soup for about the same price. For six cents a pupil can get a sandwich, bowl of soup and a boiled egg" (Davies 1915:1). Apparently this early lunch program was not continued, possibly for lack of interest or funds, because school board minutes contain no discussion of, or funding for, a hot lunch program, and no cook was employed or food purchased.

During the Depression there may have been a short or limited New Deal federal-relief sponsored lunch program -- in school board minutes there is a 1943 reference to discontinuing free lunches because the WPA had stopped subsidizing them (Minutes, Feb. 8, 1943). A 1947 graduate of Morris High School remembers that there was no hot lunch during her years of attendance, circa 1935-1947. She remembers that the "country" kids brought their lunches and ate in the school (possibly in the gymnasium) and that the rest of the children went home for lunch. She indicates that buses carried the West Side children from the high school to Longfellow, giving them a shorter walk home. After lunch the children walked back to Longfellow and were bussed back to the high school (Stevenson 2003). A retired Morris High School principal recalls that everyone had at least an hour for lunch prior to hot lunch programs being offered in schools. He observed that after the hot lunch program was established, the lunch hour was shortened to half an hour to encourage students to eat at school (Behm 2003).

The establishment of a hot lunch program in Morris in 1949-1950, like that in many rural Midwestern towns, probably resulted from the passage of the National School Lunch Act of 1946. The Act was the first federal law that recognized the "exceptional benefit" of school lunch programs by permanently funding them.

Like kindergarten, the school lunch or "hot lunch" program was an educational reform that began in Europe and was first implemented in the United States in large cities. By the turn of the century, low cost and free school lunches were being served in cities like Boston, Philadelphia, and Milwaukee where it was recognized that many children from poor families were coming to school malnourished and exhausted. Many of the first lunch programs were run by charitable organizations. Parent-Teacher Associations, first established in the early 20th century, sometimes sponsored hot lunch programs, as did mothers clubs and other volunteer groups. Public money was increasingly used for school lunches in the 1920s. The number of programs nationwide remained small, however, with only about 64,500 school cafeterias operating in 1931 (Gunderson 1971).

During the Depression the number of poor and malnourished children grew, and it became well recognized that children who were hungry could not learn. States began to authorize school districts to operate cafeterias, but did not mandate it. During the Depression some federal money flowed toward school lunches via New Deal agencies and through food commodity programs that gave excess agricultural products to schools.

School lunches were cut back dramatically during World War II when the nation's excess food supply shrank because of the large quantities of food needed by the armed forces. Food distributed to school lunch programs dropped from 454 million pounds in 1942 to only 93 million pounds in 1944, and staff to operate lunchrooms also decreased as the nation's labor force was redirected toward the war effort. By 1944 there were only 34,000 schools nationwide serving school lunches under the federal commodities program, as well as a few operating without federal help (Gunderson 1971).

During the 1930s and 1940s school boards had no assurance that federal support would continue year after year because federal commodity programs were reauthorized annually and were dependent on the amount of surplus food available. This uncertainty made school districts hesitant to add expensive cafeterias to their schools and kept the number of hot lunch programs low.

In 1946, three years before work began on the 1949-1950 wing, Congress finally passed the National School Lunch Act, which, for the first time, authorized permanent funding for school lunches and brought widespread recognition of the educational value of good nutrition. The federal money could be used for both food and equipment and led to the widespread establishment of school lunch programs. Hot lunches were further supported by the Agricultural

Act of 1949 that expanded the food commodity program, and by various amendments to the National School Lunch Act during the next several years.

1956 Wing

The 1956 wing, which is outside of the period of significance, was designed by Traynor and Hermanson of St. Cloud and built by Nelson Construction Company. Consulting engineer was Gausman and Moore, and mechanical contractor was Kain and Wood. Like the 1949-1950 structure, the 1956 wing was a product of post-war population growth and school consolidation. Like the 1949-1950 wing, it was built during a time of relative prosperity in the community. It was built the same year that bids were let for a new Stevens County Courthouse in Morris.

The 1956 construction project added a classroom wing to the eastern side of the 1949-1950 wing. The new wing included an elementary library and an elementary gymnasium with a stage at one end. Classrooms within this wing had lower ceilings, sinks in each room, and bathrooms in the kindergarten rooms. The 1956 work also expanded the brick link between the high school and the Art Deco auditorium-gymnasium. The enlarged link contained four classrooms that were especially equipped for home economics, art, and science, as well as a new entrance foyer.

The construction project was completed in time for the opening of the 1956-1957 school year, which had a record enrollment of 1,200 students. During the previous school year, overflow classes were held in the Sunday School wing of the First Lutheran Church and at the Morris Armory. School crowding continued to be a problem for the Morris school district for many years. As late as 1964 rooms at the First Lutheran Church and in the Morris armory were still being used for overflow classes.

Recent Years

In 1969, after many years of planning and five attempts at passing a bond referendum, the district constructed a new one-story high school on a site about eight blocks east of the school. Grades 10-12 were transferred into the new facility. Many country schools in the area had just recently closed, and the new space also created room for seventh through twelfth graders from Cyrus to attend classes in Morris. Additionally, St. Mary's School no longer offered high school classes, and those students were also enrolled at the Morris High School.

During the 1980s, Longfellow School on the West Side was closed and its first and second grade students were moved into the Morris Elementary and Junior High School, as the former high school was now called. The school then served grades K-8 for the next several years.

In 1991 grades 7 and 8 were moved out of the building and into an addition on the 1969 high school. Since that time, the former Morris High School has housed kindergarten through sixth grade, as well as various administrative offices and special programs.

Additional Information

Public Works Administration (PWA)

The 1934 high school auditorium-gymnasium and a new Longfellow grade school on the West Side were both funded in part by the Public Works Administration (PWA). The PWA had been founded in 1933 during the first few months of the Roosevelt administration as part of President Roosevelt's first round of Depression-relief New Deal programs. The PWA was specifically designed to spur the stagnant construction industry and funds were granted to public building projects in which private contractors were used. The private contractors were required to hire local workers to fill the common labor positions, but the entire work force did not have to be comprised of unemployed workers. The PWA operated until June of 1941, a time when many New Deal programs were ended as the United States was preparing to enter World War II.

State Emergency Relief Administration (SERA)

The new Morris High School auditorium-gymnasium (like the new Longfellow School) was landscaped by workers hired during the Depression under a State Emergency Relief Administration (SERA) grant. The SERA, a state agency, was created to work with the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), a federal agency that had been established in May of 1933. The FERA was the New Deal's first major work relief agency and was organized to pass federal money to local governments for poverty relief, with an emphasis on work programs. An SERA in each state passed most funds on to the local level. Many SERA/FERA workers were drawn from the unemployed who registered at local National Reemployment Service offices.

In December of 1935, the FERA was abolished after the Works Progress Administration (WPA) was founded. The WPA was a similar program and many unfinished SERA/FERA projects were assumed by the WPA. Although the federal agency was eliminated, Minnesota's SERA continued to operate and become the agency that certified workers for the WPA. Minnesota' s SERA was renamed the State Relief Agency (SRA) in January of 1936 and was finally discontinued in 1939.

Works Progress Admin./Work Projects Admin. (WPA)

The 1941 athletic fields and playground were built by Work Projects Administration (WPA) labor. First named the Works Progress Administration, the WPA was created in May of 1935 and became the largest and most comprehensive New Deal program. Over the years, the WPA would employ some 8.5 million Americans, and spend a total of $11 billion dollars. The WPA cooperated with state and local governments to complete needed public improvements and at the same time provide work and wages for the unemployed. In 1939, the WPA was reorganized and renamed the Work Projects Administration, keeping the same "WPA" initials. The WPA was dissolved in June of 1943.

Alban and Lockhart

The Morris High School, built in 1914-1915, was designed by Alban and Lockhart, a St. Paul firm with extensive experience in school design. William Linley Alban (1873-1961), the senior architect in the firm, reportedly had designed 75-80 school buildings by 1914 ("New High School" 1914). He had been practicing in St. Paul since circa 1906 and had been a partner in several firms -- Thori, Alban, and Fisher; Alban and Fisher; Alban and Hausler; and Alban and Lockhart -- all in St. Paul. Less is known about G. L. Lockhart (1883-?). He apparently went into partnership with Alban in 1914, the year construction of the Morris High School began. Lockhart had been practicing in the eastern and southern U.S. during the previous 12 years. Lockhart is credited with designing the Hancock High School in Hancock, Michigan, in 1922, probably as lead designer for Alban and Lockhart ("Alban and Lockhart"; "New High School" 1914).

A. B. Dunham of Sund and Dunham

The Morris High School auditorium-gymnasium, built in 1934, was designed by architect Arthur Barrett Dunham (1886-1972) of the firm Sund and Dunham of Minneapolis. A. B. Dunham also designed Longfellow School, built in Morris the same year. Dunham graduated from the University of Illinois in 1911 and worked for several architecture firms in Illinois before joining forces with Engebret H. Sund (1879-1938) circa 1916 in Minneapolis. Sund and Dunham designed several schools, churches, hospitals, and other public buildings throughout the Midwest. Their work in Minnesota includes the Edina High School (Edina), St. Mary's Church (White Bear Lake), Central Lutheran Church (Minneapolis), Moose Lake State Hospital (Moose Lake), and Glen Lake Sanatorium (Chaska). Dunham was president of the Minneapolis chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 1933-1934. During the Depression, Dunham worked for the Home Owners Loan Corporation, a federal New Deal agency, in Nebraska. In 1944 joined the staff of the Atomic Energy Commission in Washington, D.C. ("Sund and Dunham").

Frank W. Jackson

Frank W. Jackson (1904-1985) designed the Morris High School athletic fields that were constructed in 1940-1941. Jackson was a prominent St. Cloud architect who began to practice in that city in 1934 after working as an architect in Iowa. In St. Cloud he first practiced in the office of Nairne Fisher (with whom he had worked in Iowa). He worked with Fisher on the design of St. Mary's Cathedral of St. Cloud. Jackson designed many houses, schools, and commercial buildings in central Minnesota. His projects at the State Normal School (now St. Cloud State University) include five buildings and the campus's football stadium of 1939, known as Selke Field (Dahl 1996).

George W. Pass, Jr. of Pass and Rockey

The 1949-1950 wing of the Morris High School was designed by George W. Pass, Jr., of the Mankato firm of Pass and Rockey. According to a 1948 article in the *Morris Tribune*, the Pass and Rocky partnership was well known for its school design work ("Board Retains" 1948).

George W. Pass, Jr. (1891-1959) worked with his father in the firm George Pass and Son beginning in 1910. George Pass and Son designed the Mankato Armory (1914) and the Fairmont Armory (1914). The younger Pass was in partnership with Paul Thomas Rockey from 1927 to 1955. Among Pass and Rockey's school commissions was a 1940 wing for the Montevideo Public School ("Pass, George W."). By 1959 Pass and Rockey had also designed all of the buildings in the Mankato public school system, as well as a junior high school and elementary addition in North Mankato. The firm's other projects included a number of Mankato businesses ("George Pass" 1959).

Conclusion

The Morris High School is a significant example of the growth, development, and importance of public education in small Minnesota communities. Each wing of the school, as well as development of the grounds, reflects broad trends in the history of public education, as well as public and professional demand for continually improved facilities. The institution played a central social and cultural role in Morris, both by educating nearly all local children between 1915 and 1950, and by serving as a social and cultural center for the entire community.

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA, CONTINUED

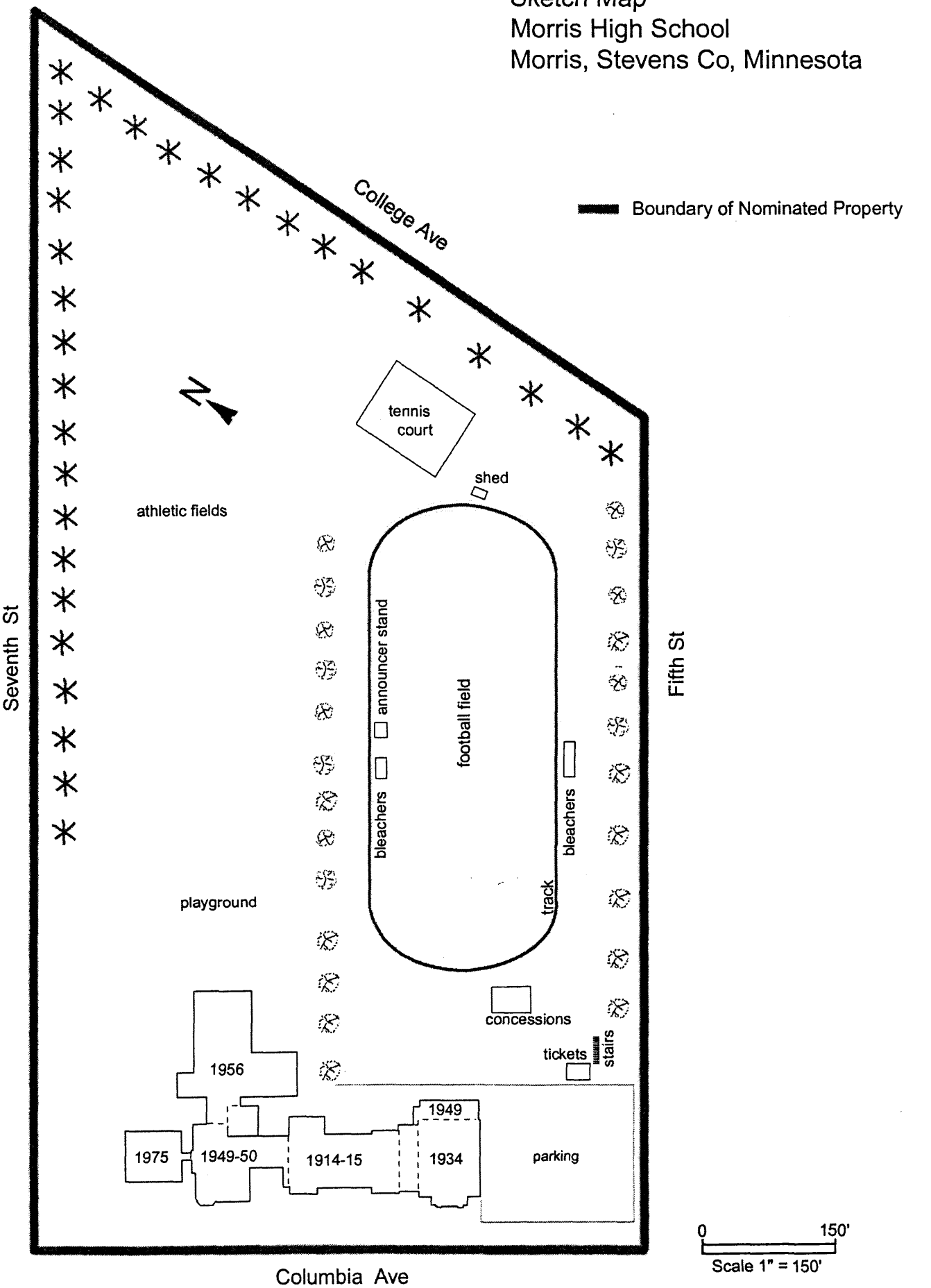
Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is shown by the solid line on the accompanying map entitled "Sketch Map, Morris High School, Morris, Stevens Co., Minnesota."

Boundary Justification

The nominated property is comprised of the parcel of land historically associated with the Morris High School.

Sketch Map
Morris High School
Morris, Stevens Co, Minnesota



prep by Gemini Research 07-03

Sketch Map
Morris High School
Morris, Stevens Co, Minnesota