			557 - 1 1994	1	
NPS Form 10-900 (Oct. 1990) United States Department of the Interior National Park Service			RECEIVED 413		
y entering the informati rchitectural classificatio	ion requested, it an item do	ies not apply to the property being ionificance, enter only categories	INTERAGENCY RESOLUTIONS IN A Signature of ites and districts. See instructions in A Signature of Complete each new by Indiank' SE in the appropriate g documented, enter "NA" for "not applicable." For fur and subcategories from the instructions. Place addition miter, word processor, or computer, to complete all item.	ai	
Name of Proper	rty		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		
istoric name	Clermont Pu	blic School			
ther names/site nu	Larra	bee School			
Location					
treet & number	505 Larrabe	e Street	N/A not for publicatio	n	
ity or town	Clermont		N/A □ vicinity		
ate Iowa	code	A county Fayette		5	
	gency Certification				
⊠ meets □ does □ nationally □ s	s not meet the National Reg	jister criteria. I recommend that the e continuation sheet for additional 10 - 3 - 9 Date			
Signature of certify					
Signature of certify State Hist State of Federal ac	gency and bureau	s not meet the National Register of	criteria. (		
Signature of certify <u>State Hist</u> State of Federal ac	gency and bureau property	s not meet the National Register o Date	criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional		
Signature of certify <u>State Hist</u> State of Federal ac In my opinion, the comments.)	gency and bureau property		criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional		
Signature of certify <u>State Hist</u> State of Federal ac In my opinion, the comments.) Signature of certify State or Federal ac	gency and bureau property  meets  does ying official/Title gency and bureau	Date	criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional		
Signature of certify <u>State Hist</u> State of Federal ac In my opinion, the comments.) Signature of certify State or Federal ac National Park Se	gency and bureau property  meets does ying official/Title gency and bureau ervice Certification			ction	
Signature of certify <u>State of Federal ac</u> In my opinion, the comments.) Signature of certify State or Federal ac National Park Se ereby certify that the p D entered in the Na	gency and bureau property meets does ying official/Title gency and bureau ervice Certification property is: ational Register.	Date		ction	
Signature of certify <u>State of Federal ac</u> In my opinion, the comments.) Signature of certify State or Federal ac National Park Se ereby certify that the p entered in the Na See conti determined eligibby National Registo	gency and bureau property meets does ying official/Title gency and bureau ervice Certification property is: ational Register. inuation sheet. le for the ter	Date	Keeps Date of Ac Ball 1/22/95	ction	
Signature of certify <u>State of Federal ac</u> In my opinion, the comments.) Signature of certify State or Federal ac National Park Se Pereby certify that the p entered in the Na See conti determined eligible National Registe See conti determined not eligible	gency and bureau property meets does ying official/Title gency and bureau ervice Certification property is: ational Register. inuation sheet. le for the ter inuation sheet. ligible for the	Date	Keeps Date of Ac Ball 1/22/95	ction	
Signature of certify <u>State of Federal ac</u> In my opinion, the comments.) Signature of certify State or Federal ac National Park Se ereby certify that the p entered in the Na See conti determined eligible National Registe See conti	gency and bureau property meets does ying official/Title gency and bureau ervice Certification property is: ational Register. inuation sheet. le for the ter inuation sheet. ligible for the ter.	Date	Keeps Date of Ac Ball 1/22/95	tion	
Signature of certify <u>State of Federal ac</u> In my opinion, the comments.) Signature of certify State or Federal ac National Park Se hereby certify that the p entered in the Na See conti determined eligible National Registe See conti determined not eligible National Registe Termoved from the	gency and bureau property meets does ying official/Title gency and bureau ervice Certification property is: ational Register. inuation sheet. le for the ter inuation sheet. ligible for the ter. a National	Date	Keeps Date of Ac Ball 1/22/95	ction	

.

.

....

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number (Do not incl	of Resour	ces within Property sly listed resources in the	y e count.)	
private	<ul> <li>➡ building(s)</li> <li>☐ district</li> <li>☐ site</li> <li>☐ structure</li> <li>☐ object</li> </ul>	Contributing Noncontributing				
G public-local ☐ public-State ☐ public-Federal		2		0	buildings	
		0		0	sit <b>es</b>	
		~0		0	structure	
		0		0	objects	
		2		0	Total	
Name of related multiple p (Enter "N/A" if property is not part	roperty listing of a multiple property listing.)		of contributional Reg	uting resources pre gister	eviously listed	
N/A		0				
6. Function or Use						
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)					
EDUCATION/school		GOVERNMENT/government office				
7. Description						
Architectural Classification Enter categories from instructions)		Materials (Enter categorie	Materials (Enter categories from instructions)			
LATE 19TH AND 2	LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY			RETE		
REVIVALS/classi	cal	walls	BRICK			
	•	roof	TERRA	COTTA		

.

•

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

#### Clermont Public School Name of Property

8. Statement of Significance

#### **Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

#### **Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

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

Fayette County, Iowa

County and State

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions) ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

Period of Significance 1912-1913

Significant Dates

1912

1913

Significant Person

Larrabee, William

#### Cultural Affiliation

#### Architect/Builder

Dieman, Charles A.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

#### 9. Major Bibliographical References

#### Bibilography

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

#### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- □ Other State agency
- □ Federal agency
- **I** Local government
- Other

#### Name of repository:

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Clermont Public School Name of Property	Fayette County, Iowa County and State
10. Geographical Data	
Acreage of Propertyapproximately 5 acres	
UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)	
1 1.5 60.98.0.0 4.76.110 Zone Easting Northing 2	3   3     Zone   Easting     4   1     5     See continuation sheet
(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 Robert C. Vogel, Preservation P.	lanning Consultant
organization Robert C. Vogel & Associates	date31 August 1994
street & number270 Brimhall Street	telephone (612) 698-8224
city or townSt. Pauls	tateMN zip code55105
Submit the following items with the completed form: Continuation Sheets Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the proper A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having la	
Photographs	
Representative black and white photographs of the prope	rty.
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 <u>City of Clermont</u>	······
street & number	
city or town Clermont s	tateIAzip code52135
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for appl properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to ame a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (1)	nd existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain

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

NP5 Form 10-900-a (8-86) OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

**RECEIVED 413** OCT | 0 1995 **INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION** NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Clermont Public School Fayette County, Iowa

### Description

The Larrabee School is a two story Neoclassical style building designed by architect Charles A. Dieman and constructed in 1912-1913. The essential character defining architectural element is the building's wall cladding of locally manufactured red brick laid in stretcher bond with chocolate-brown mortar. The school has a raised basement covered with rusticated ashlar and the attic is covered by a low pitch ridged hip roof covered with interlocking red ceramic tiles. The facade shows symmetrically balanced windows, denticulated cornice, pilasters, and a center doorway that is dominated by a one story classical entry portico with four Doric columns. "PUBLIC SCHOOL" and "1912" are inscribed upon the stone panel over the main entry. A plaque on the foyer wall bears the inscription: "This building with equipment is a gift from Ex-Governor and Mrs. William Larrabee." Located in the oldest residential neighborhood in the town of Clermont, the school occupies a large lot at the southeast corner of Larrabee and North streets. The Larrabee School is substantially unaltered and in good condition. Repairs to the roof and exterior finishes were made in 1992, when the building was converted to office use.

The building measures 83 feet 6 inches in length and is 63 feet 8 inches wide. Vertically, it is divided into basement, first floor, second floor, and attic levels. The arrangement of interior spaces within the massed rectangle ground plan emphasizes symmetry and utility. The raised basement contains manual training rooms, furnace room, cisterns, and storage rooms. The first floor is given over to classrooms, teachers' rooms, and the school office. In addition to classroom space, the second floor contains a large auditorium and a museum-art room. The attic was designed for storage.

Structurally, the building is substantially over-engineered -- Governor Larrabee, the school's patron, is said to have instructed the architect to "double

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Clermont Public School Fayette County, Iowa

### Description (continued)

the strength of everything we build."<sup>1</sup> Its design emphasizes fireproofing and the structural system features massive reinforced concrete walls with brick facing, steel rafters, and concrete decks. The only wood used in the building is in the window frames, the auditorium stage door, the mahogany floor in the museum, and some minor furnishings. Load bearing brick walls are thirty inches thick with four air cavities. Non-load bearing walls are solid brick, eighteen inches thick. The basement walls are finished with glazed brick and four-foot high marble wainscoting.

Decorative details in Classical, Renaissance, and Beaux Arts orders occur around the portico, walls, and roof. The main entrance is sheltered by classical portico one story in height, consisting of a flat entablature supported by round Doric columns made of white Vermont marble. Brick pilasters with Doric capitals are attached to the exterior walls, which are crowned by a terra cotta cornice molding adorned with dentils. The roof has a slight eave overhang and is equipped with copper gutters and downspouts. The roof slope on the principal elevation is interrupted by two small arched dormers with round windows. A single masonry chimney rises above the rear slope of roof. Fenestration is symmetrical throughout. Paired doublehung windows with masonry heads, sills, and lintels and wooden frames, sash, and muntins dominate the facade. The basement windows have copper frames and rusticated keystone lintels. The double front doors are bronze with copper frames and sash.

Although its architectural significance lies primarily in its brick construction and classical stylistic embellishments, the Larrabee School has a number of interesting interior design elements. Classrooms have green enameled brick wainscoting, stonewood floors, and Pennsylvania slate blackboards and were originally equipped with metal chalk rails and moldings and oak teacher's desks. The first and second floor hallways have terrazo tile floors and marble

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Argo-Gazette (West Union, Iowa), 31 December 1913.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Clermont Public School Fayette County, Iowa

### **Description** (continued)

wainscoting with glass partitions to provide maximum light. A well appointed 58 by 34 foot auditorium with a 10 foot stage dominates the east end of the second floor. The stage drop curtain is decorated with a 23 by 15 foot oil painting of children playing in "Dandelion Time," executed by Theodore Behn of Chicago. There was also a library and an adjoining museum, located on the southwest corner of second floor, the latter used to exhibit the school's collection of statuary and other art objects.

Besides fireproofing, the 1912 design integrated a number of recent technological innovations reflecting its benefactor's keen interest in school safety and sanitation. For example, the school was equipped with a modern forced air ventilation and central indirect radiator heating systems. Fresh water was piped into the school from a deep well located to the south of building and stored in two large 700-barrel capacity cisterns which was then distributed through an electricpowered pressure tank system. There was also a central vacuum cleaning system.

Behind the school building is a detached single story hip-roofed brick lavatory building which also dates from 1912. This building, which is presently used for storage, is in somewhat deteriorated condition but nevertheless contributes to the historic character of the property. The school yard contains playground equipment and a substantial amount of open space.

The Larrabee School's educational functions ceased in 1990 and the property was acquired by the City of Clermont, which rehabilitated the building. Since 1992, it has functioned as an office building, housing various businesses, municipal offices, and the public library. Much of the school furniture (desks, chairs, bookcases, etc.) has been removed, including the auditorium seats, although most interior spaces remain substantially unaltered.

### National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

Clermont Public School Fayette County, Iowa

### Statement of Significance

The Larrabee School is a monument to Governor William Larrabee's concept of the "Ideal School." Built of Clermont red brick, the Neoclassical Style building entered public school service in 1913 and functioned as a public school until 1990. The significance of this property is the product of its association with Larrabee, particularly with regard to his involvement as a philanthropist and supporter of public education. It is also architecturally significant as an outstanding example of the use of locally manufactured Clermont brick.<sup>2</sup>

#### Historical Significance

The Larrabee School was named in honor of its patron, William Larrabee, the twelfth governor of Iowa and for more than half a century the town of Clermont's leading citizen. He was born on 20 January 1832 on a farm near Ledyard, Connecticut, one of six children or Captain Adam Larrabee and Hanna Gallup. At the age of nineteen he became a teacher at a rural school in Connecticut; two years later he set out for Iowa, where he worked as a foreman on his brother-in-law's farm near Garnavillo in Clayton County before teaching school near Hardin, in Allamakee County. In 1857 Larrabee arrived in Clermont and soon established himself as a merchant miller and real estate developer. There, on 12 September 1861, he married Anna M. Applegate, the daughter of a Connecticut sea captain whose family had immigrated to northeast Iowa in 1854. Larrabee's energy, industry, and ability made him a prominent local character and in 1868 he was elected to the state senate, where he served for seventeen years. He was elected governor in 1885 and won reelection in 1887. His

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>The basis for evaluating the historical and architectural significance of the Larrabee School are the local historic contexts "The Brick City (1850s-1940s)" and "Governor William Larrabee (1857-1916)" developed by the Clermont Historic Preservation Commission. For discussion of historic contexts, representative property types, and registration requirements, see Robert C. Vogel, <u>Historical and Architectural Survey of Selected Properties in Clermont, Iowa</u> (St. Paul, 1991), 4-32 and passim.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

Clermont Public School Fayette County, Iowa

#### Significance (continued)

administration was widely regarded as one of the strongest in Iowa history up to that time.<sup>3</sup>

But it was as a philanthropist, especially in the area of public education, that Larrabee made his most important and lasting impact on Clermont. Throughout his career, Larrabee had taken a persistent interest in education and as state senator and governor preached educational reform as a goal of public policy. One of his campaign slogans was "a schoolhouse on every hill and no saloons in the valley." In his first inaugural address, delivered on 14 January 1886, he stated: "The most powerful look of progress is education . . . it is the duty of every state to educate." Later that same year he spoke before the state teachers' association on the "ideal school." His biennial addresses to the state assembly in 1888 and 1890 also included appeals to improve public schools.<sup>4</sup> Privately, he had an important impact on public education statewide through his generous gifts to the University of Iowa, the State Agricultural College at Ames, Upper Iowa University at Fayette, and the State Historical Society in Des Moines.<sup>5</sup>

Larrabee's concern with public education was no doubt born of his experience with rural schools, including his early stint as a schoolteacher in Allamakee County and his connection with the common schools in Clermont.<sup>6</sup> This latent interest in public education quickened when he became acquainted

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup><u>The Dictionary of American Biography</u>, 21 vols. edited by Dumas Malone (New York, 1928-1936), 3:6-7; <u>Portrait and Biographical Album of Fayette County. Iowa</u> (Chicago, 1891), 155-156; Cyrenus Cole, <u>Iowa</u> <u>Through the Years</u> (Iowa City, 1940), 369-374; and Ruth A. Gallaher, "From Connecticut to Iowa," <u>The</u> <u>Palimpsest</u> 22 (1941), 65-78; and the Larrabee Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa (Montauk). <sup>4</sup>Original manuscripts and copies of the Governor's speeches are preserved in the Larrabee Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa (Montauk).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Governor Larrabee's stand in education reform is discussed in Herman Clarence Nixon, "The Populist Movement in Iowa," <u>Iowa Journal of History and Politics</u> 24 (1926), 39.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Larrabee's personal journal from his years as a schoolteacher is preserved in the Larrabee Papers at Montauk.

### National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

Clermont Public School Fayette County, Iowa

### Significance (continued)

with the leaders of the national education reform movement. Eminently a man of practical sense, one who wasted little effort on fanciful projects, the logical focus for Larrabee's interest in education reform was on the creation of an "ideal school" building. To this end, he undertook a personal study of school architecture as well as curricula. The population growth and general prosperity of the 1880s and 1890s made new schools imperative and ushered in a new era in school architecture and construction. Educators and politicians like Henry Barnard (1811-1900), Edmund Marsh Wheelwright (1854-1912) and William George Bruce (1856-1949) had promulgated specifications for various models of the "modern" schoolhouse.<sup>7</sup> Across the country during the Progressive Reform Era, lay experimenters applied their knowledge and fortunes to local schools and in the process made contributions of inestimable value. Many of these were comfortable, attractive, efficient buildings located at the hubs of rural life. These events were signals to Larrabee that the time was at hand for an experiment in modern school building at Clermont.<sup>8</sup>

In 1912, the Larrabee family decided to finance a modern public school building in Clermont, to be constructed and equipped under Governor Larrabee's personal direction, and then turned over to the local school district. A local newspaper article written on the occasion of the school's donation provides insight into the Larrabees' personal involvement in the project:

<sup>8</sup>A review of Larrabee's personal papers and writings suggests that he was familiar with the views expressed in the two most important contemporary works produced by the modern school movement, Barnard's <u>Report</u> on <u>School Architecture and Plan for Graded Schools</u> (Washington, 1870) and Wheelwright's <u>School</u> <u>Architecture: A General Treatise for the Use of Architects and Others</u> (Boston, 1901). A copy of the third edition of Bruce's <u>School Architecture: A Handy Manual for the Use of Architects and School Authorities</u> (Milwaukee, 1906), found its way into Larrabee's personal library at Montauk and doubtless guided his approach to the Clermont school project.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> For background, see Clarence D. Aurner, <u>History of Education in Iowa</u>, 5 vols. (Iowa City, 1914-1920), and James E. Meiborg's unpublished doctoral dissertation, "A 50-Year Period in the Evolution of Schoolhouse Design and Construction in Iowa, 1919-1969" (University of Iowa, 1970).

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

Clermont Public School Fayette County, Iowa

### Significance (continued)

For probably fifteen years both Governor and Mrs. Larrabee had made school buildings a special study. Mrs. Larrabee made it a point to visit the school buildings wherever she went. The splendid site was purchased by Mr. Larrabee with this end in view so that this grand monument to their generosity is the result of many years of study, preparation, and formation of plans and specifications. The long years finally yielded plans and specifications that were entirely satisfactory. When entirely satisfied with the ground plans they were submitted to an architect who put in over a year's work on them until the full plans and specifications were agreed upon.<sup>9</sup>

After approaching the school board and purchasing the proposed school site, the project was made public in the pages of the Clermont *Enterprise* on 2 May 1912. At the time, the Clermont school was held in a building constructed in about 1867 (this school occupied the site of the present junior high school, built in 1924). Larrabee selected Charles A. Dieman of Cedar Rapids as his architect and directed him to assemble plans and specifications early in 1912. Little is known of Dieman's career, other than that he was principal partner in the firm of Dieman & Company (formerly Dieman & Fiske), with offices in the Granby Building in Cedar Rapids. Dieman apparently designed a number of school buildings in Iowa and was a member of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), eventually serving as president of the Iowa chapter in 1920 and 1921.<sup>10</sup> R. A. Wallace of Cedar Rapids was chosen as contractor. Construction work began in 1912 under the supervision of foreman George H. Peasley of Clermont. Charles K. Morton was the foreman in charge of the finishing work.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>"Clermont's New School Building: The Gift of Governor and Mrs. Larrabee," in the Clermont <u>Enterprise</u>, reprinted in the West Union <u>Argo-Gazette</u>, 31 December 1913.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>Dieman and Company is listed in the Cedar Rapids city directory for 1898. Its advertisement in the 1914 state business directory includes a lithograph of the Larrabee School in Clermont as part of a montage of "Recent School Buildings Erected from the plans of Chas. A. Dieman & Co.; R. L. Polk & Co.," Iowa State Gazetteer and Business Directory, 1914-1915 (Detroit, 1914), 4.

### National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

Clermont Public School Fayette County, Iowa

### Significance (continued)

While the steel, marble, fixtures, and physical plant had to be obtained from distant sources, the primary construction materials (brick and stone) were obtained locally.<sup>11</sup>

#### Architectural Significance

The Larrabee School is a landmark building, probably the best example of Neoclassical architecture within the community and one of the few historic buildings in Clermont that was designed by a professional architect. At the local level, the architectural significance of the Larrabee School is the product of its association with brick architecture in Clermont. The city's nickname, "The Brick City," is based on the historic importance of the local brickworks in the town's economic development as well as the distinctive aesthetic qualities of the community's numerous brick masonry buildings.<sup>12</sup>

No single feature distinguishes Clermont more than its brick commercial, residential, religious, and civic architecture.<sup>13</sup> More than forty historic brick buildings survive. The great majority of these were constructed between 1860 and 1940 and represent examples of a wide range of types and stylistic influences.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>The best account of the building of the school, with details on its design and fixtures, is in the local newspaper account of the donation of the school, which was reprinted in the West Union <u>Argo-Gazette</u> edition of 31 December 1913. Specifications for the Larrabee School, drawn up by Dieman and transmitted to Larrabee on 25 April 1912, are preserved, along with other documents relating to the school, in the Larrabee Papers at Montauk.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>An overview of the "Brick City (1850s-1942)" local historic context is in Vogel, <u>Historical and</u> <u>Architectural Survey</u>, 9-10; see also David Gebhard and Gerald Manshiem, <u>Buildings of Iowa</u> (New York, 1993), 370-372.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>Discussion of brick building property types is in Vogel, <u>Historical and Architectural Survey</u>, 15-26.

### National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

. Clermont Public School Fayette County, Iowa

#### Significance (continued)

#### Larrabee School

Construction began in the spring of 1912 and the building was enclosed that winter. William Larrabee died at Montauk on 16 November 1912, leaving Anna to superintend the fulfillment of their concerted plans. Interior and finishing work continued into 1913 and was completed before the end of the year and delivered to the school board in January. For Governor and Mrs. Larrabee, the project was truly a labor of love, as indicated by Anna in her address on the occasion of the school building's formal acceptance by the school board:

When Mr. Larrabee was a little boy he lived in Connecticut and the schoolhouse where he attended school was not much larger than this stage. The stove was in the center of the room and the seats were around the outside. He had the headache almost every day and he thought the air in the room was not good. When our children attended school they had eye trouble and headache from the same cause and he realized the ventilation of the schoolrooms was imperfect. And Mr. Larrabee thought the children of Clermont were entitled to the best to be had, as he loved Clermont and her people. We studied hygiene, school architecture, particularly heating and ventilating, talked with leading educators and the result is that this building is as perfect as it could be made and we hope it will prove an example to other communities.<sup>14</sup>

The Larrabees bore the entire cost of building and equipping the school, personally paying each bill submitted by the various subcontractors and vendors. The total cost, including land and architectural fees, came to more than \$100,000, according to family sources.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>The text of Mrs. Larrabee's address on 30 January 1914 is preserved in the Larrabee Papers at Montauk. <sup>15</sup>Henry Follett, "An Evaluation of the Larrabee School in Clermont," unpublished manuscript (1987) in the Historic Preservation Bureau, State Historical Society of Iowa (Montauk and Des Moines).

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10

Clermont Public School Fayette County, Iowa

### Significance (continued)

"Clermont's new school building is justly the pride of every resident," declared the local newspaper,"A pride that has extended throughout the county, besides gaining statewide prominence. It is considered to rank first among the school buildings of the state, and experts have frequently made the broad statement that for its size, it is the finest and most beautiful, the best constructed and most practically equipped school building erected to this day."<sup>16</sup>

The Larrabee family's gift included student and teacher desks, a complete library, a Cable piano, victrolas, organs, globes, clocks, desk bells, and mahogany seats in the auditorium. The school's museum also became the repository for part of the family's extensive collection of art and memorabilia.

The Larrabee School opened its doors in 1913 and housed all grades until 1924, when the new high school was built. The Larrabee family continued to play a role in keeping up the building, especially the museum and art room, until around 1960. This direct family tie to the school continued until Anna Larrabee, the last of William and Anna's children, died in 1965.<sup>17</sup> The school remained in use as an elementary school until 1990 and was afterwards acquired by the City of Clermont, which maintains its municipal offices and public library there and has developed the property for general office use. As a consequence, some interior spaces have been altered and some historic furnishings (e.g., classroom desks, auditorium seats, museum display cases, etc.) have been removed.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>Argo Gazette, 31 December 1913.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup>Follett, "Evaluation of the Larrabee School;" see also Clermont Historical Society, <u>Historic Clermont</u>, 3rd ed. (Elkader, 1987), 57-64.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 11

Clermont Public School Fayette County, Iowa

### Bibliography

- Anonymous. "Clermont's New School Building." <u>The Argo-Gazette</u> (West Union), 31 December 1913.
- Aurner, Clarence D. <u>History of Education in Iowa</u>. 5 vols. Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1914-1920.
- Clermont Historical Society. <u>Historic Clermont</u>. 3rd edition. Elkader, Ia.: Griffth Press, 1987.
- Cole, Cyrenus. <u>Iowa Through the Years</u>. Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1940.

Dictionary of American Biography, edited by Dumas Malone. 21 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928-1936.

Follett, Henry. "An Evaluation of the Larrabee School in Clermont." Unpublished manuscript, [1987].

- Gallaher, Ruth A. "From Connecticut to Iowa." <u>The Palimpsest</u> 22 (1941), 65-78.
- Gebhard, David, and Gerald Mansheim. <u>Buildings of Iowa</u>. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Iowa State Gazetteer and Business Directory, 1914-1915. Des Moines: R. L. Polk & Co., 1914.

Larrabee, William. Papers. State Historical Society of Iowa, Montauk.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Add'1 Page 13

Clermont Public School Fayette County, Iowa



# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Add'1 Page 13

Clermont Public School Fayette County, Iowa



# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Add'1 Page 14

Clermont Public School Fayette County, Iowa



(8-86)

. ·

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Add'1 Page 15

Clermont Public School Fayette County, Iowa

