

SOCIAL CENTER
FEATURES IN NEW ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL ARCHITECTURE

AND THE
PLANS OF SIXTEEN SOCIALIZED SCHOOLS

BY
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PREFATORY NOTE

The first part of this pamphlet appeared in the April, 1912, number of the American School Board Journal under the caption "Social Center Ideas in New Elementary School Architecture," and is here reproduced with the permission of the publisher of that periodical. Many of the schools referred to had already been described in its previous numbers, and from them much of the information here given was obtained.

For loans of drawings and plates, and for the furnishing of information the author wishes to make grateful acknowledgment to the following persons: Superintendent B. D. Billingshurst, Mrs. Desha Breckinridge, Mr. William C. Bruce, the Commissioner of Education, Messrs. Cooper and Bailey, Professor A. Caswell Ellis, Messrs. Garber and Woodward, Mr. Charles R. Greco, Mr. A. F. Hussander, Mr. William B. Ittner, Assistant Professor Charles W. Killam, the Langslow, Fowler Company, Superintendent W. C. Martindale, Mrs. George Merck, Director of Schools Charles Orr, Messrs. Rogers and Manson, Superintendent of School Buildings C. B. J. Snyder, and Edward J. Ward, Adviser on Civic and Social Center Development.

The purpose of the pamphlet is to make available to those who are engaged in constructing new buildings some of the most advanced plans that have been adopted in American cities.

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Social Center Features in New Elementary School Architecture*

BY CLARENCE ARTHUR PERRY

RUSSELL SAGE FOUNDATION

The Civic League of Lexington, Kentucky, was endeavoring to get a new school building for a neglected district of the city. The school board was agreeable, but the funds then available would meet only a fraction of the cost. The enterprising women and men (this order is necessitated by the facts) who compose the League resolved not to wait for municipal action. Securing the services of a prominent architectural firm, they asked it to embody certain ideas in an economical plan. When the sketches were done they were published in the newspapers and also sent to people all over the city on post cards, with this description:

"The basement of the new school shows a kitchen, a carpenter shop, and a laundry where the children will be taught. * * * The swimming pool and showers are to be open to the young people and the adults of the community as well as to the school children. * * * On the main floor, in addition to the classrooms, there is a large room to be used as kindergarten, gymnasium and auditorium. In the morning the kindergarten children will occupy it. It is a story and a half high to accommodate the gymnasium apparatus. With the stage at the end and folding chairs it may be converted into an auditorium for stereopticon lectures, musical entertainments and plays. When the school buildings belonging to the people are used by the people as their club houses, where recreation, physical activity and educative amusement may be had by the young in proper environment, the saloon evil and other social evils will not cut so large a figure in our civilization. * * * The top floor shows four classrooms, and a little library or reading room where the excellent library extension work now being carried on may develop. The flat roof of the combined gymnasium and kindergarten room below may be used for an out-door school."

After the merits of their plan had had time to sink into the

* Plans of nearly all the schools referred to in this article are shown on pages 18-55.

public mind, they held a nine days' campaign soliciting funds. A twenty-five foot barometer, set up in front of the courthouse, indicated from day to day the results of their efforts. On the last day the balance of the amount required was guaranteed and now a model schoolhouse is going up in Lexington which, more literally than usual, is being built *by* and *for* the people.

A survey of the newer elementary schoolhouses in two score of our leading cities and towns demonstrates that the motive to provide structures which can be used by adults, as well as children, is becoming increasingly active. Most of the features which are converting the modern public schoolhouse into a social center were originally provided to meet new educational demands. But modern education is becoming so pleasant a process that the people who in their youth fled from the classroom with alacrity are now coming back to it with a new enthusiasm. The evening classes, parents' meetings and public lectures have demonstrated to the school officials that the people appreciate the new privileges and so they are extending them. The playground movement is also exerting pressure upon the schoolhouse doors. If it is wise to provide wholesome play opportunities during the summer it is equally wise to look after the young people's recreational needs during the long winter evenings. Thus the building committees are beginning to think also of the schools as evening recreation centers and adapt them accordingly.

While few cities have as yet adopted standard plans which include all of the facilities discussed below, the rapidity with which they are appearing in the newer buildings indicates their general adoption in the near future. At the present time a majority of the leading cities and towns are providing assembly rooms in all of their new school buildings.

THE AUDITORIUM

The prevailing tendency is to place this room in the lower part of the building where it will be easy of access. In New York, where the H plan is frequently followed, the assembly room is in the basement underneath the open court and is provided with as good overhead lighting as can be obtained through a pavement. The seats are fixed and there is a gentle slope to the floor, making it possible for little children to see the platform from the rear of the room. In the Chicago schools of the Mozart type, the assembly room occupies a large one-story extension in front of the



CORRIDOR, WEBSTER SCHOOL, ST. LOUIS, MO. Wm. B. ITTNER, ARCHITECT.
Courtesy of U. S. Bureau of Education.
A cultural influence that is increasing the art assets of many neighborhoods.

schoolhouse proper. Sliding doors of solid paneled oak 17 feet high divide the room in halves, one portion of which is covered with cork matting and is used as a gymnasium. The rear half of the room shows a gentle incline and is furnished with fixed opera chairs. When movable seats are placed in the gymnasium part, the auditorium will seat eleven hundred people. At night the main part of the schoolhouse can be completely shut off, entrance to the auditorium being had directly from the street through the front of the extension. Skylights add to the illumination in the day time.

In an increasing number of cities the auditorium occupies the first floor over the basement and is so placed that it can be entered without passing the classrooms. This is the plan followed in the Emerson school at Gary, Indiana, which has an assembly hall seating 824 persons. The rear end of the room abuts on the main corridor and its main entrances are opposite the principal's office and the front vestibule of the school. There are open courts on both sides of the hall, thus affording fine daylight illumination through the side windows. The stage is at the opposite end, making it possible for persons to enter without greatly distracting the attention of the audience. When the stage is near the main corridor of the school, it is more convenient for the principal and those who occupy the platform, but the disturbance made by late-comers is increased, since they have to enter in full view of the audience.

Recent schools in Cincinnati, Boston and several other cities have the long dimension of the assembly room running parallel to the main corridor. Under this arrangement the exits are usually on the corridor side of the hall, while the other is the principal source of daylight illumination. In the new Guilford school in Cincinnati the hall is located between the two main entrances so that dispersing audiences can find easy egress from the corridor.

For a number of years past the Detroit Board of Education has provided all the new buildings with auditoriums seating four hundred or more people. These rooms are on the first floor and are used for kindergarten purposes in the forenoon. They are separated from the main corridor by folding glass doors, which can be folded back to the wall, thus enabling that part of the audience which is seated in the corridor to enjoy any entertainment being held in the kindergarten. In these rooms the young

people who attend the social centers hold their dancing parties and club meetings, and enjoy games and folk dancing. In several other cities the kindergarten and assembly room are combined. In the East Avenue school, Kalamazoo, Michigan, the assembly room is provided with two hundred and seventy-five single desks and is used as a study room for the ninth and tenth grades. Its floor slopes gently to the front, where there is a level space wide enough to hold a movable platform.



Courtesy of the Reno School Trustees.

ASSEMBLY HALL, MCKINLEY PARK SCHOOL, RENO, NEV.

It is a common practice to provide the assembly room with a balcony or gallery, which sometimes runs half way around the room on both sides. These are generally entered from the story above. While the seats in the gallery are usually fixed, the lower floor, especially when it is level, is frequently provided with movable chairs and these are sometimes stowed beneath the stage. This arrangement makes it possible to clear the floor quickly for dancing.

The stage in the Gary school, referred to above, is equipped with foot-lights and a drop curtain, and all its appointments conform to the Chicago fire ordinances. In two of the new schools in Reno, Nevada, the stages are provided with two complete sets of scenery, one of a parlor and the other of a garden. Besides the foot-lights there are three sets of border lights of different colors, which, as well as the two electroliers in the audience room, are controlled from the stage. In connection with the dressing-rooms there is a lavatory where hot and cold water are available. The stage of the Kalamazoo auditorium, which has been mentioned, is provided with a trap-door and there are iron stairs leading to the fly-galleries. The new Froebel school in Gary is to have a stage so large that it can be used, when desired, as an additional "gym" room. The provision of two dressing or ante-rooms in connection with the stage is pretty general. The new Rusk school in Houston, Texas, is to have an auditorium 40 x 70 feet, in which a large dressing-room is provided back of the stage and an ante-room at the side.

THE GYMNASIUM

For some years inside playrooms have been pretty generally provided. Now the more progressive school boards are beginning to equip their ward schools with regular gymnasiums. The usual location is in the basement, and frequently under the assembly room. As has been noted, in the newer schools in Chicago the gymnasium forms a part of the assembly room. In New York there are playrooms for both sexes on the ground floor, which are equipped with a certain amount of apparatus. The newer schools here are also furnished with two "gym" rooms located on some of the upper floors. Each room is about the size of two classrooms and, according to the very latest plan, is provided with a rubber-tile floor having a basket-ball court outlined in green and white. The electric lights are embedded in the ceiling in such a way that the screens which protect them are flush with the ceiling. The Emerson school in Gary has two "gyms," each 26x71 feet, in the basement, while its new Froebel school will have still larger gymnasiums located on the first floor, on the two sides of the auditorium. They will be connected with the playground in the rear by independent entrances. The gymnasium of the Kalamazoo school is beneath the assembly room and has a running track. In the Eagle school in Cleveland,

there is not only a large gymnasium in the basement, but there are also two inside playrooms. The Westwood school in Cincinnati has a gymnasium 38x64 feet, while that in the new Guilford school, of the same city, covers an even larger space. This school, as well as the Eagle school in Cleveland, is also provided with two roof gardens, while roof playgrounds have been enjoyed in several of the New York schools for a long while. The Winslow school of Beverly, Massachusetts, is furnished with a bowling alley, and some of the Milwaukee schools are equipped with pool tables. In St. Louis, Cincinnati, and a number of other cities the cor-



Courtesy of The Brickbuilder.

SWIMMING POOL, EMERSON SCHOOL, GARY, IND.

ridors of the schools are being built so large that they can be used as indoor playrooms during inclement weather.

BATHS

The provision of opportunities for strenuous physical exercise in our school buildings has brought with it the necessity of affording bathing facilities. Few schools now furnished with gymnasiums are without shower baths in the adjoining dressing-rooms, while many of the new schools in New York, Cincinnati, and several other cities possess commodious plunge rooms. The new Froebel school in Gary will be equipped with two swimming

pools, each 21x60 feet, and having locker and dressing-booth accommodations for four hundred men and three hundred women, these being so arranged that they can be used by outside people without interfering with those of the pupils. In the new Thorndike school in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the bathroom is provided with twenty-four shower bath compartments, and the dressing-rooms which flank the two sides of the bathroom have the same number of compartments.

LIBRARY ROOMS

Five of the Grand Rapids ward schools have branches of the local public library in their basements, which are open from 12.30 to 9.00 p. m. The Detroit schools which are used as social centers also have branch library stations, while the evening recreation centers in the New York schools all have, in their quiet-game rooms, traveling libraries affording circulating privileges. The plans of the Guilford school, Cincinnati, show a library and museum, and a "Social Room." These rooms are on the ground floor near an outside entrance, thus making it possible for people of the neighborhood to use them without going through the rest of the school building. The same arrangement is followed in the new Rusk school plan, Houston, which provides for a library room 23x31 feet, with an adjoining club room.

Some sort of library room is pretty common in public schools throughout the country, though it is usually intended to meet the needs of the pupils instead of the outside public, and is consequently placed on an upper floor where it will be conveniently accessible to the pupils of the higher grades. Putting a public reading room in the ward schoolhouse brings the library nearer home, and the children going back and forth constitute an excellent messenger service for the adults who wish to use the circulating privileges.

SHOPS AND KITCHENS

The manual training and domestic science rooms, which now form a part of the equipment in most public schools, are also making them more available for evening use. There is many a young man who finds recreation around a carpenter's bench, making articles for his room, an opportunity which he cannot find in his own home. The school kitchen facilitates the holding of suppers

and various other social occasions when it is customary to serve refreshments.

The tendency is to place the manual training rooms, as far as possible, in the basement. Sometimes, as in the case of the Chicago schools, the wood-working room is on the first floor, and the domestic science rooms are on one of the upper floors. In the Guilford school, where these rooms are located on the third floor, the shop has an office and the domestic science room has a dining room and a laboratory adjoining. The plans for the Rusk school in Houston place both of these rooms on the



Courtesy of The Brickbuilder.

DOMESTIC SCIENCE ROOM, EMERSON SCHOOL, GARY, IND.

ground floor. The manual training room has a paint room and lumber room adjacent, while at the other end of the building is the cooking laboratory with a model dining room, laundry, dressing-room and storeroom adjoining. There is also an alcove for cupboards and lockers. The sewing room is separate from these, but on the same floor. The Eagle school in Cleveland is provided with a kitchen laboratory on the second floor, adjoining which there are a model kitchen, living room, bedroom, and storeroom.

Many of the newer school buildings are now provided with lunch rooms. The Houston plan, which has been mentioned,

shows two large lunch rooms in the basement, separated by a kitchen and pantry having entrances to both rooms. The boys' room is 23x56 feet, and can also be used as a playroom. On the third floor of the Cleveland school, which has been referred to, there is also a lunch room with a kitchen adjoining.

REST ROOMS AND DISPENSARIES

The increased thoughtfulness regarding the health of both teachers and pupils, now shown in the planning of buildings, has also contributed to the neighborhood serviceableness of the modern public school. Practically all of the standard plans in the principal cities provide for a teachers' rest room somewhere in the school building.

In the Eagle school there are rest rooms for the teachers on two floors, one of them being connected with a smaller rest room for the pupils. In the new schools in Reno, Nevada, the teachers' room is known as a lunch room and is equipped with a small kitchen, dish closet with sink, hot and cold water and an electric stove. The teachers' room in the Thorndike school, Cambridge, Massachusetts, has also a kitchenette, stove, boiler and sink. The new Houston school is to have a rest room on the second floor and two on the third floor. Quite frequently the teachers' room is on the same floor as the principal's office and not far away. These rooms are often provided with easy chairs and tables and make convenient reception rooms for evening social functions.

The medical school inspection, which is now carried on in most up-to-date school systems, has necessitated the provision of a special room for that work. In Cleveland it is known as a dispensary, and in the Eagle school it is located on the first floor adjoining the principal's office and is provided with adjacent sitting and rest rooms as well as lavatories and dispensary facilities. In the Emerson school at Gary there are two "infirmaries" on the second floor. In the Houston school, there is to be a sick room 10x16 feet on the second floor, and a dispensary on the ground floor. At the Guilford school in Cincinnati there is a physician's room on the first floor, near the main entrance. The Eagle school in Cleveland has an electric elevator, making it easy to ascend to the four open-air classrooms located on the third floor.

The provision of such thorough medical facilities is hastening the time when our school buildings will become nominally, as they are now in fact, local branch health offices.

THE COST

The expense of providing the social-center facilities is not proving as great as was anticipated. The Chicago schools of the Mozart type (which cost \$162,060 complete, or \$135.06 per



Courtesy of Langslow, Fowler Co.

A MOVABLE SCHOOL CHAIR IN USE AT WASHINGTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL,
ROCHESTER, N. Y.

pupil) are considered economical buildings, since on account of their structural simplicity, they are costing about \$50,000 less than older buildings which have no more accommodations. In Gary, the luxurious facilities, which have been mentioned above, are provided at a cost of only \$100 per pupil. The cheapness here is due to the fact that the instruction is organized in such a way that there are two pupils for every classroom desk. The wraps and school supplies are kept in individual steel lockers to which the pupils have access between classes. One-half of the pupils are accommodated in the shops, playrooms or rooms de-

voted to the special branches, while the other half are in the classrooms receiving instruction in the three R's. By this plan the capacity of the school is doubled and the low per capita cost obtained.

But whatever the cost of the social facilities, if they are made to yield a larger service to the people—more protection for their children and more enjoyment for themselves—the increased financial burden is not going to rest so heavily as it did in the days fast departing, when the schoolhouse was used only by the children and for only one-third of the utilizable time.



READY FOR CALISTHENICS OR FOLK DANCING.

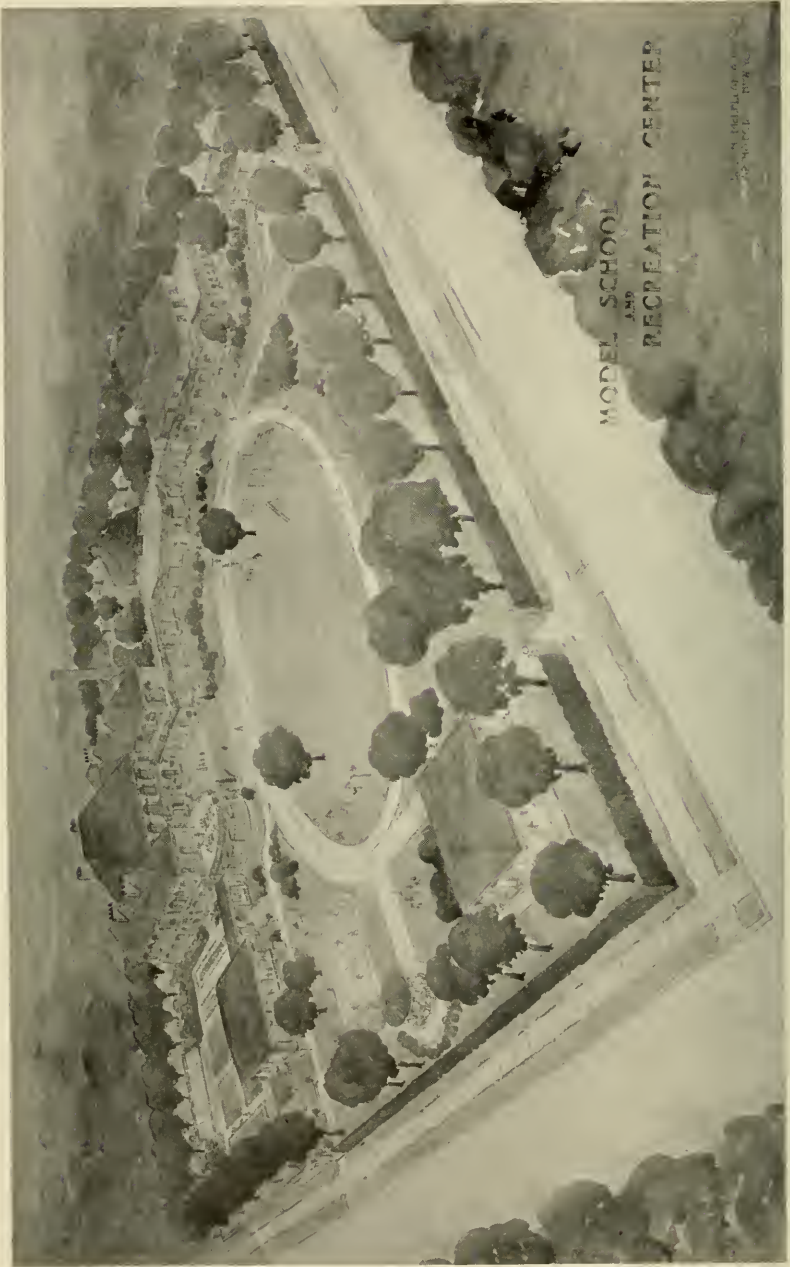
FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

There are no fixed desks or seats in the Washington Irving High School in New York City. All its classrooms are furnished with movable, flat-top desks and chairs. In Rochester there are several elementary classrooms, which are provided with a new movable seat. The desk is attached directly to the chair, which, having rubber tips on its front legs and metal slides on the rear ones, can be easily moved when desired and at the same time is not noisy when accidentally pushed. The pupil keeps his books

and supplies in a compartment underneath the seat. With movable seats, the division of the class into groups, or the arrangement of the pupils in a circle is an easy matter and makes possible a greater flexibility and vitality in the regular day-school work. This advantage, together with the enormously increased utility a class-room thus equipped has from a social-center standpoint, would seem to point to a near day when all public schools will be provided with movable chairs and desks.

The playground movement is responsible for the tendency to enlarge the school yards, which is now so noticeable throughout the country. The Emerson school is built upon a plot 320x295 feet, while the new Froebel school will occupy about ten acres of land. The part in front of the building will be devoted to a formal garden and that in the rear to playgrounds and school gardens.

Playground work requires a number of facilities which are usually found in the school building. More and more play directors wish to provide their charges with opportunities for shop work and kitchen gardening. The kindergarten room ordinarily makes a fine place for teaching folk dancing and the toilet facilities which are needed at a playground are always to be found in the schoolhouse. These needs, together with the tendency now observable in many cities to increase the proportion of small parks, seem to foretell the coming of the time when the standard lay-out will include, especially in the newer sections, a small park around each schoolhouse. Then our schools will be social centers during the summer as well as in the winter time. After supper the grown-ups will chat and smoke their pipes under the trees, while their youngsters play through the long twilight on the public school grounds. The school will cease to be regarded as a prison by the children. The teachers will have a new interest in their work and the people will feel that they have at last come into their own.

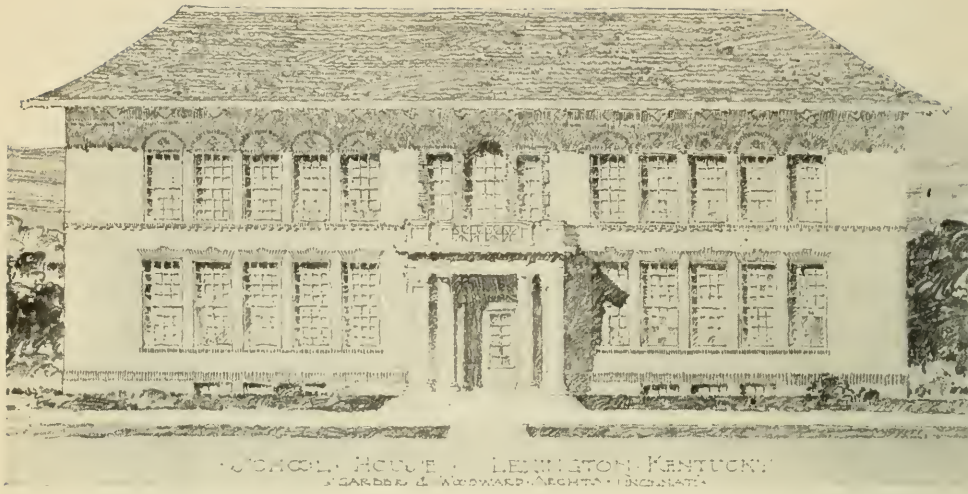


Courtesy of Mrs. George Merck.

HOW THE SCHOOL AND THE PLAYGROUND OF THE FUTURE MAY BE MERGED.
 (See ground plan on opposite page.)



GROUND PLAN OF THE MODEL SCHOOL AND RECREATION CENTER.



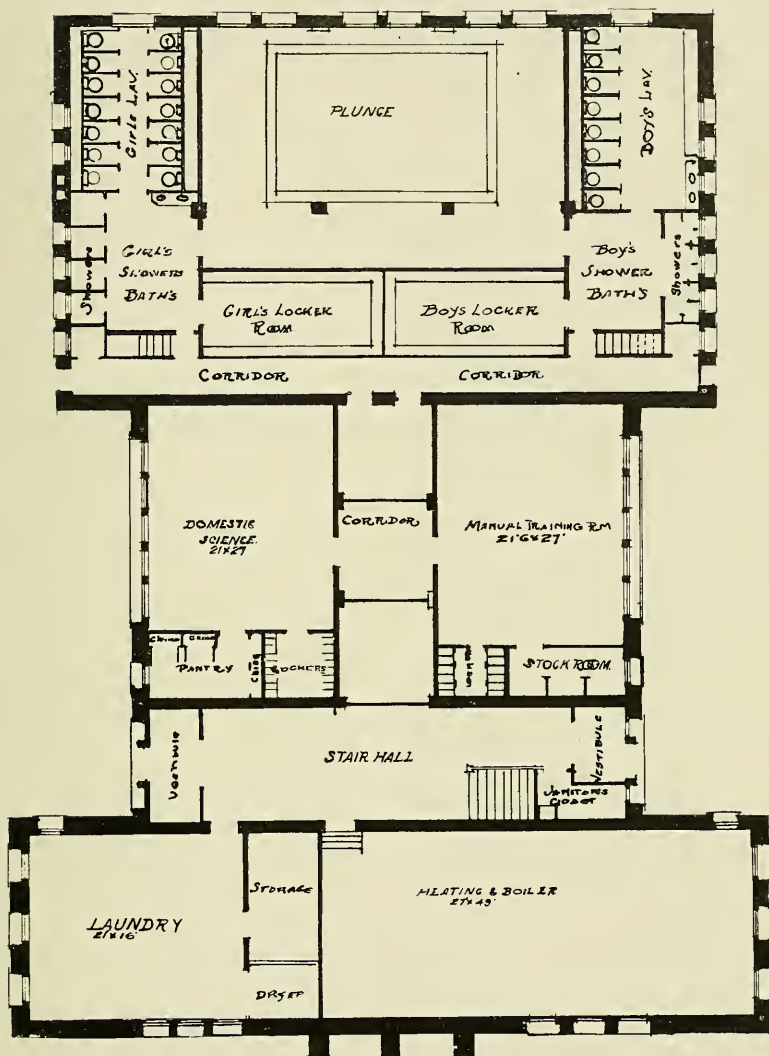
WEST END SCHOOL, LEXINGTON, KY.

Courtesy of the Lexington Civic League

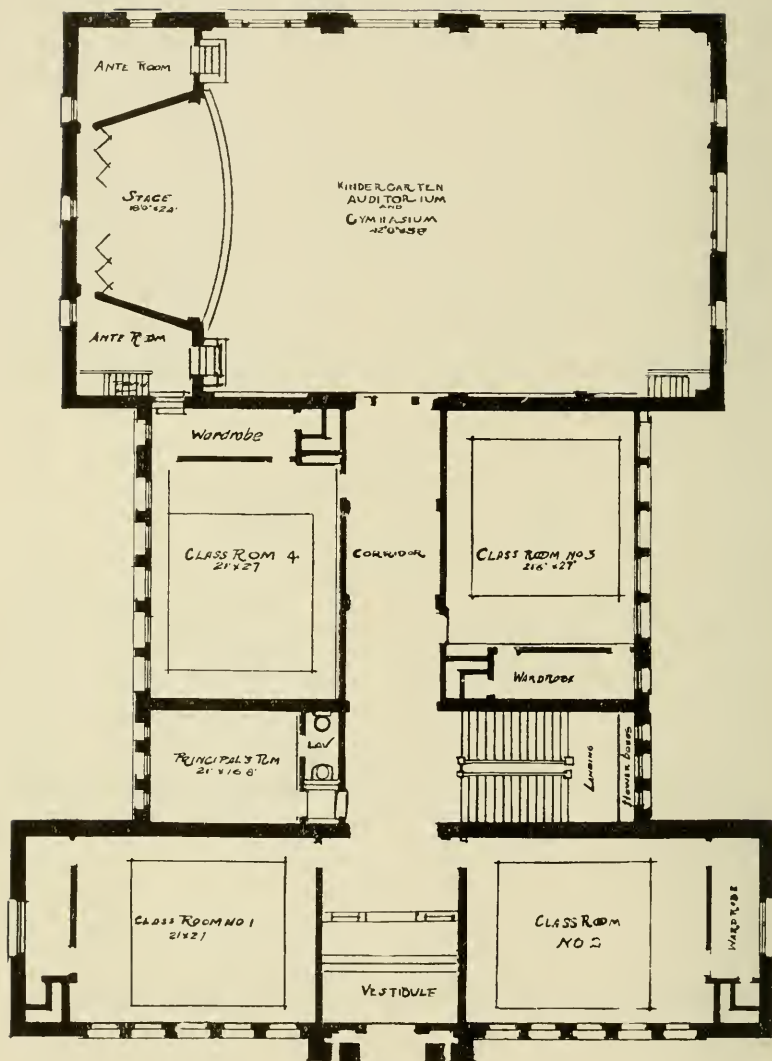
Sixteen Socialized Schools

The following plans have attracted attention because of the unusual consideration they reveal for the social and recreational needs of their environing neighborhoods. All the schools shown are devoted entirely to the elementary grades except those in Gary and Kalamazoo, and even in these cases the secondary department takes up the minor part of the accommodations. In some instances not all of the floors are shown, the purpose having been to give only those exhibiting "social center" features. Reference to many of the plans has already been made in the preceding article and additional details concerning cost, character of construction, etc., can be obtained by addressing the architects or the local superintendents of schools.

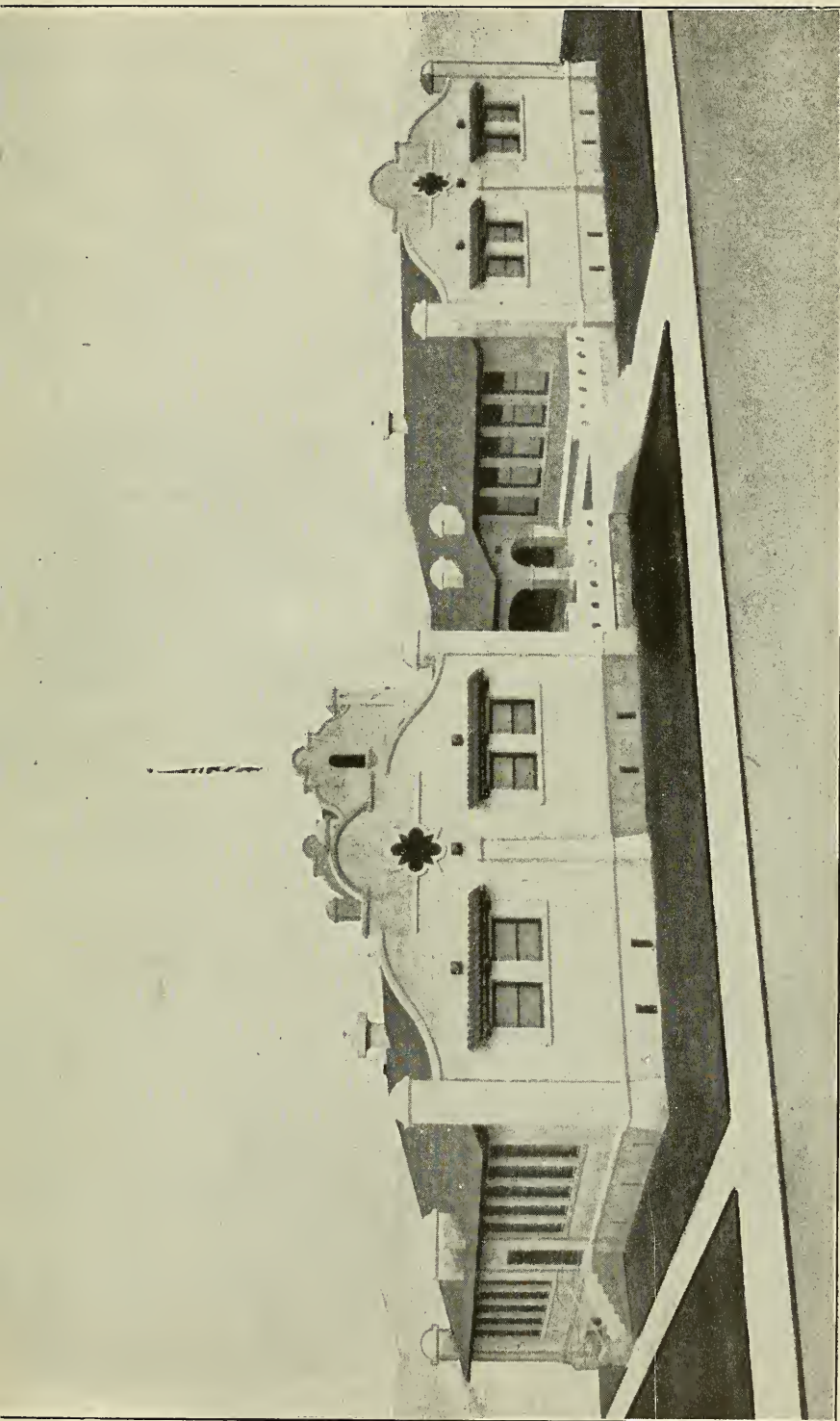
Some of these buildings are still in the process of construction; all are new. The cities in which they are being erected are not confined to the slum-ridden, densely populated class but represent wide ranges of social conditions. This fact, together with the intellectual and educational prestige enjoyed by the promoters of these buildings, indicate the substantial character of the movement which is rapidly enlarging the function of the public school plant.



WEST END SCHOOL, LEXINGTON, KY. BASEMENT. GARBER & WOODWARD, ARCHITECTS.

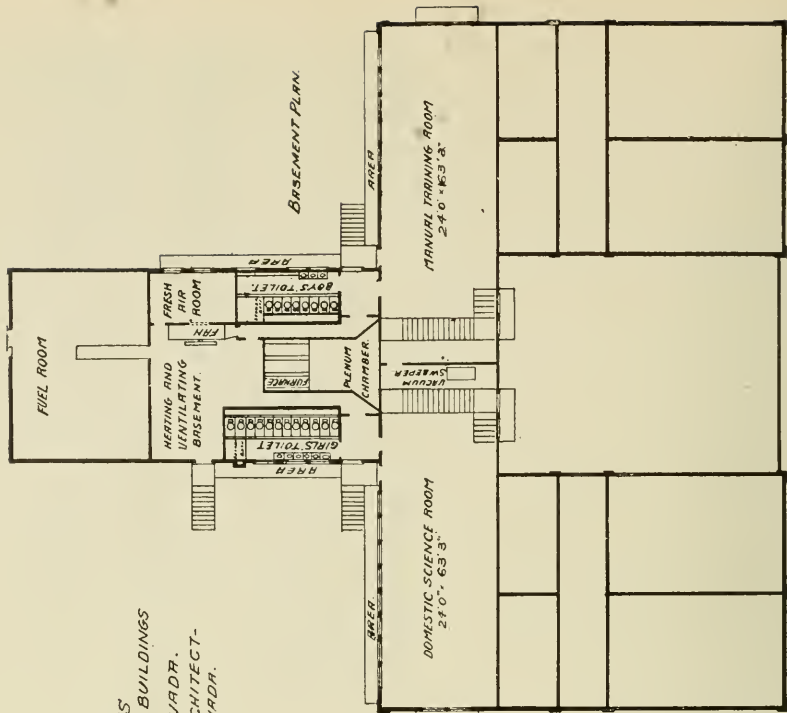
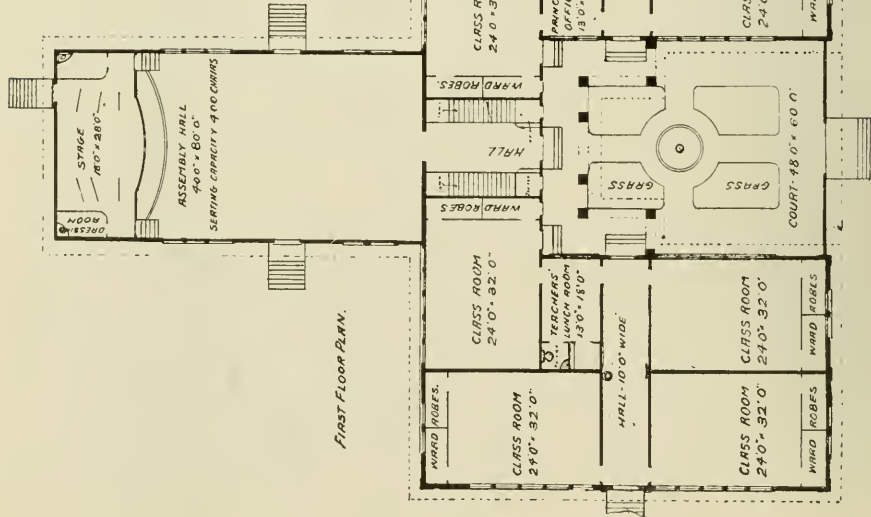


WEST END SCHOOL, LEXINGTON, KY. FIRST FLOOR.



Courtesy of Supt. B. D. Billingshurst.

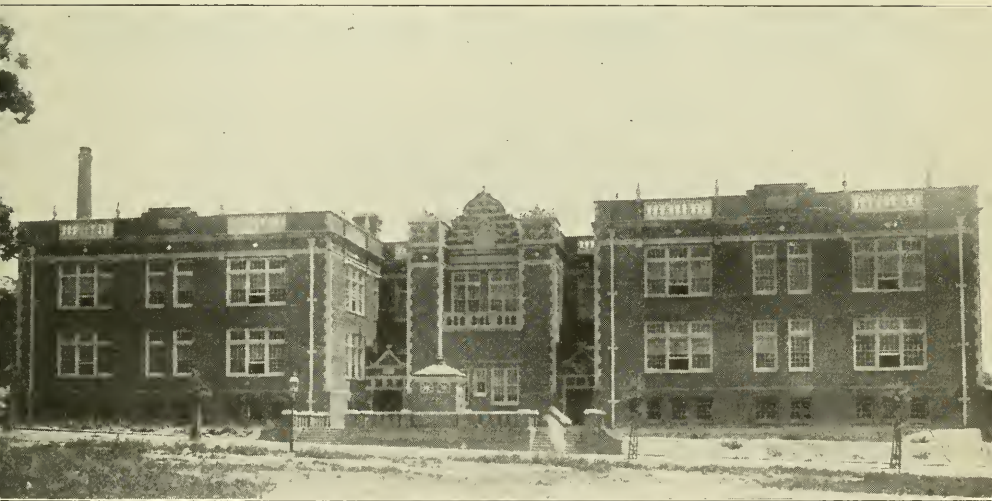
A NEW SCHOOL, RENO, NEV. GEORGE A. FERRIS, ARCHITECT.



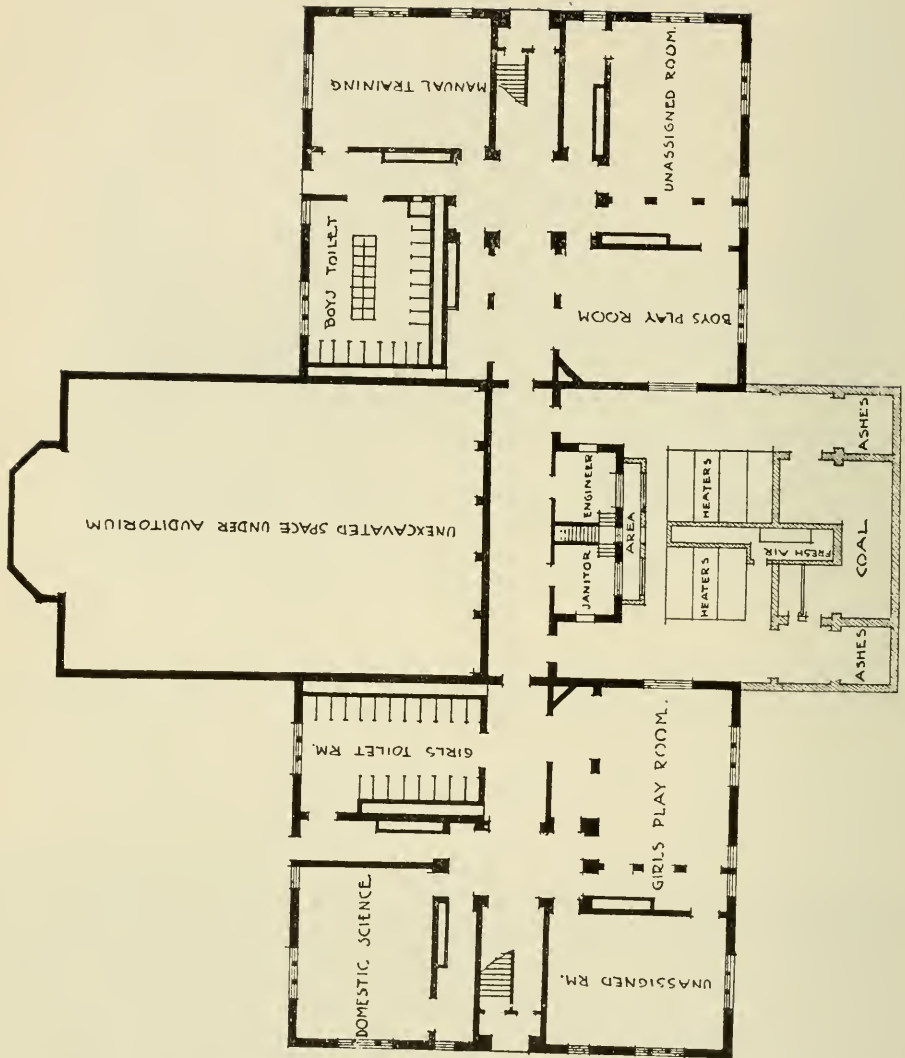
PLANS
OF TWO SCHOOL BUILDINGS
IN
RENO-NEVADA.
GEO. A FERRIS-ARCHITECT-
RENO-NEVADA.



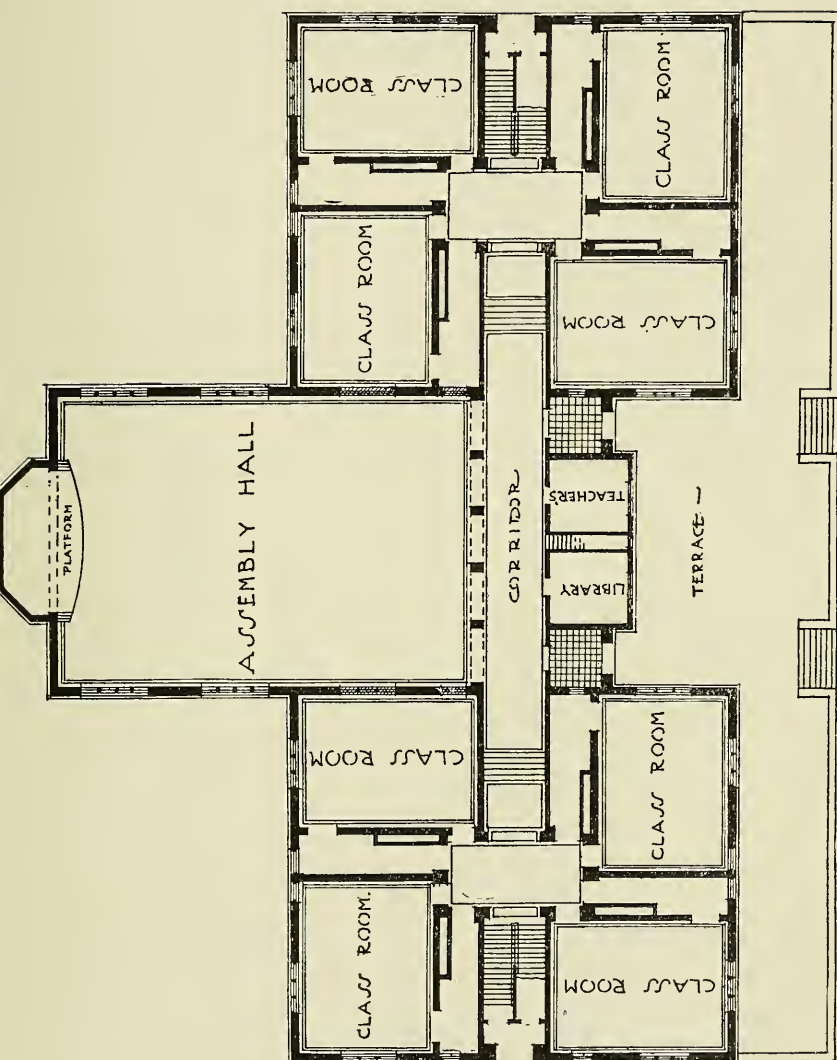
Courtesy of the Reno School Trustees.
COURT YARD, ORVIS RING SCHOOL, RENO.



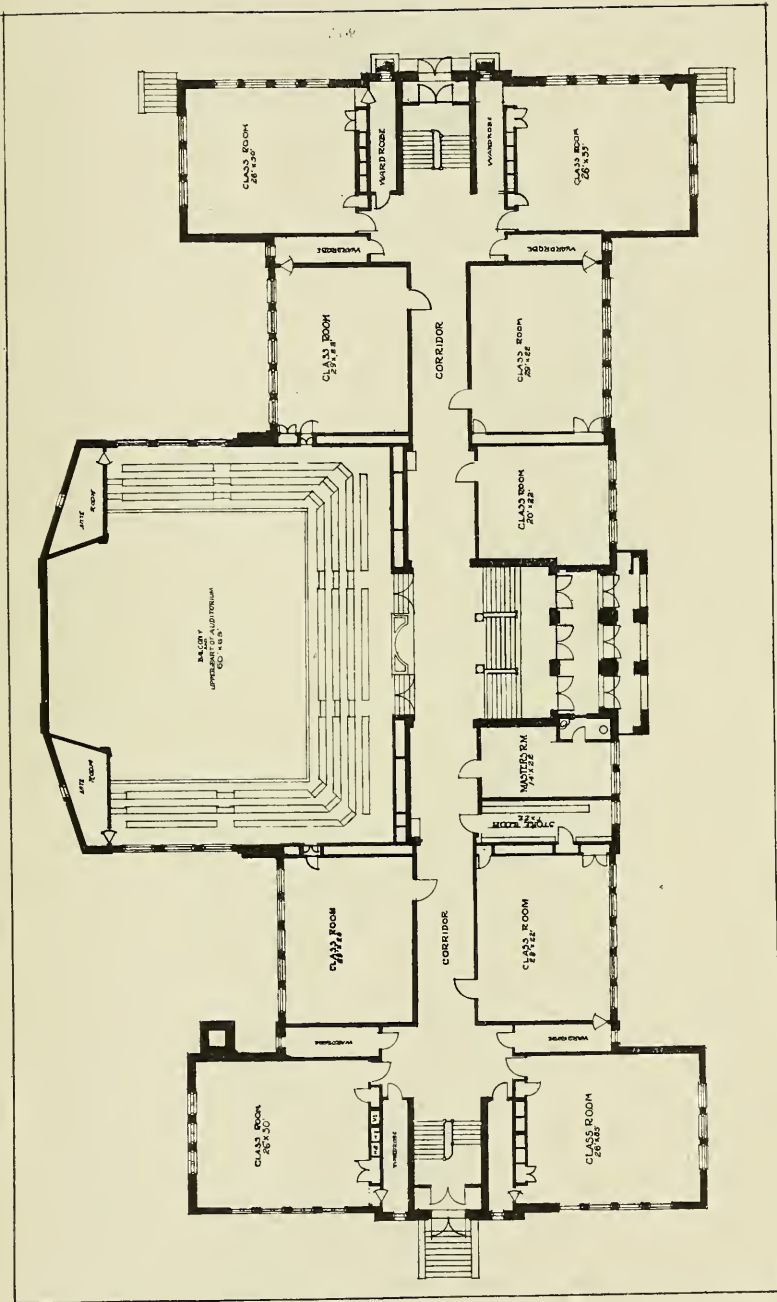
Courtesy of School Board Journal.
LUCRETIA MOTT SCHOOL, WASHINGTON, D. C. SNOWDEN ASHFORD, ARCHITECT.



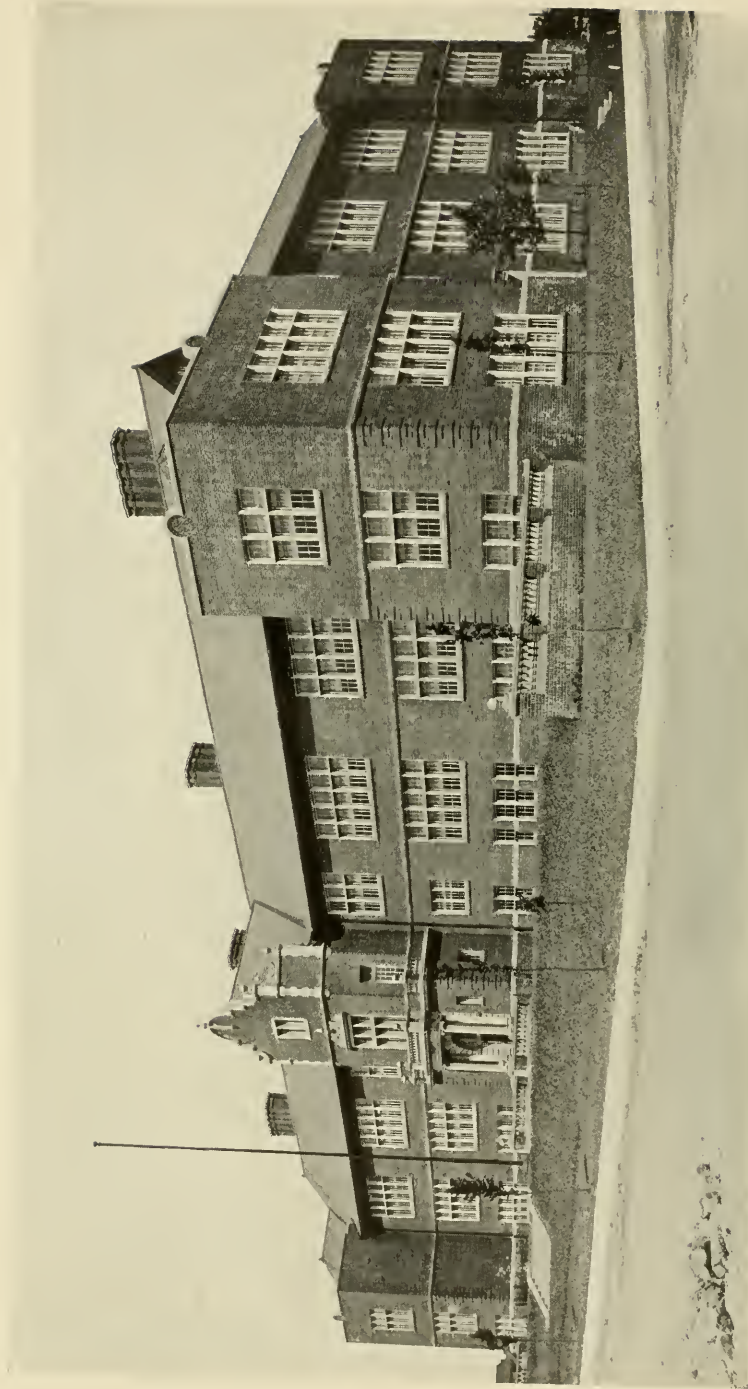
LUCRETIA MOTT SCHOOL, WASHINGTON, D. C. BASEMENT.
Courtesy of School Board Journal.



LUCRETIA MOTT SCHOOL, WASHINGTON, D. C. FIRST FLOOR.

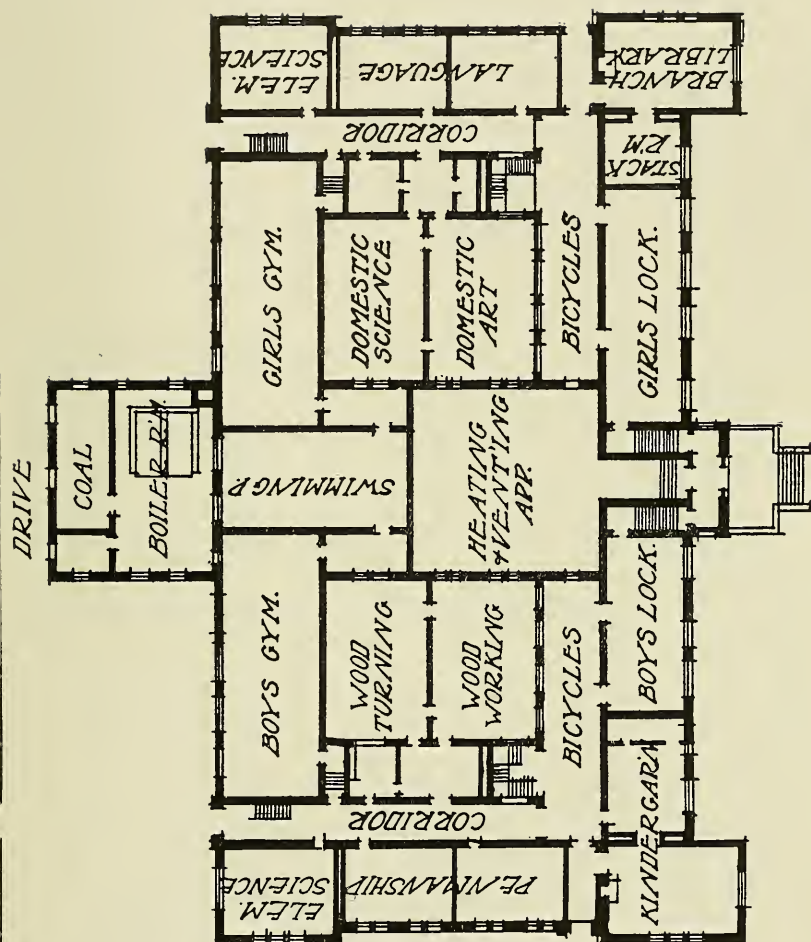


THORNDIKE SCHOOL, CAMBRIDGE, MASS. FIRST FLOOR.



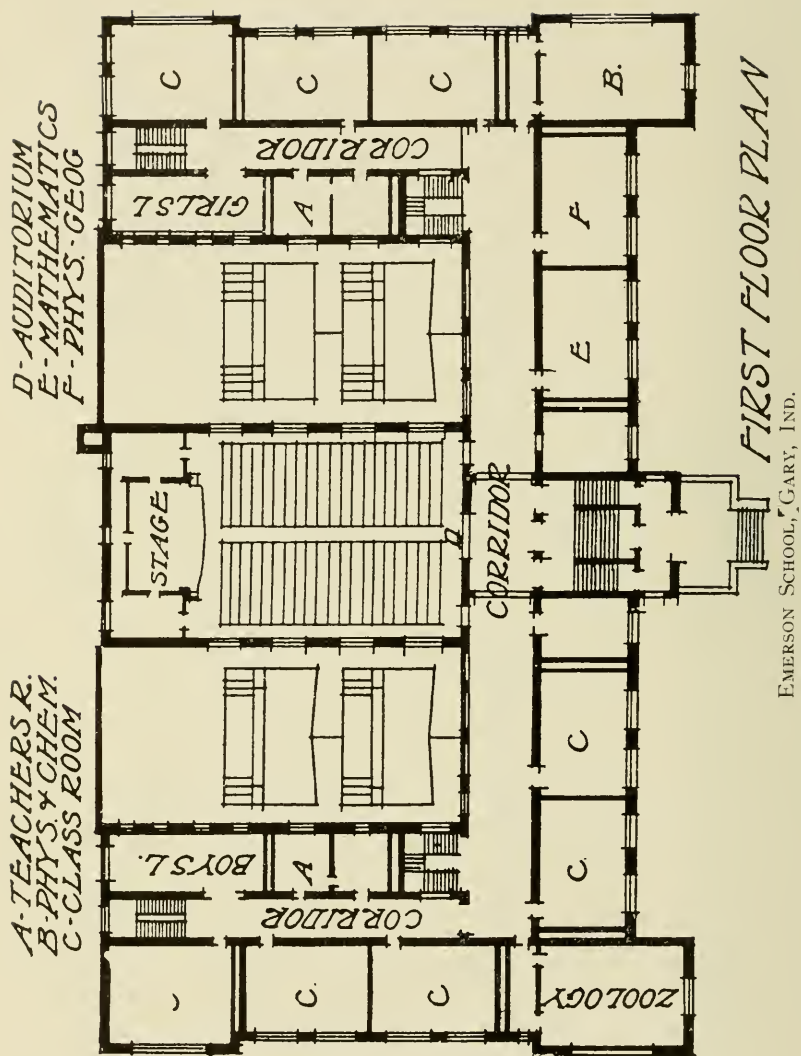
EMERSON SCHOOL, GARY, IND. Wm. B. ITTNER, ARCHITECT.

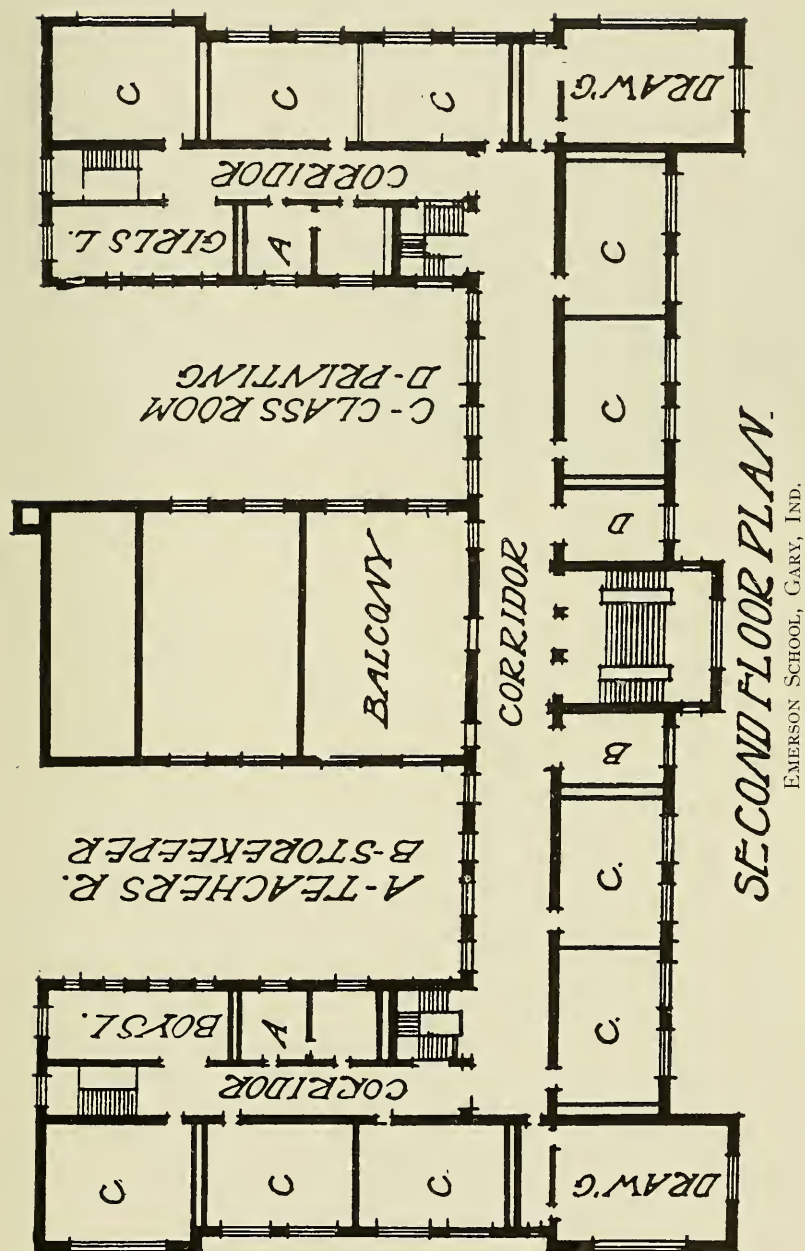
Courtesy of The Brickbuilder.



Courtesy of The Brickbuilder.

EMERSON SCHOOL, GARY, IND. GROUND FLOOR.

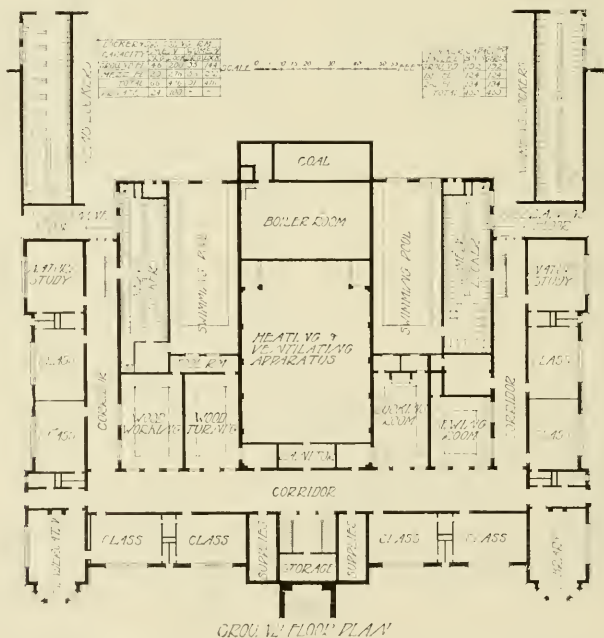






Courtesy of The Brickbuilder.

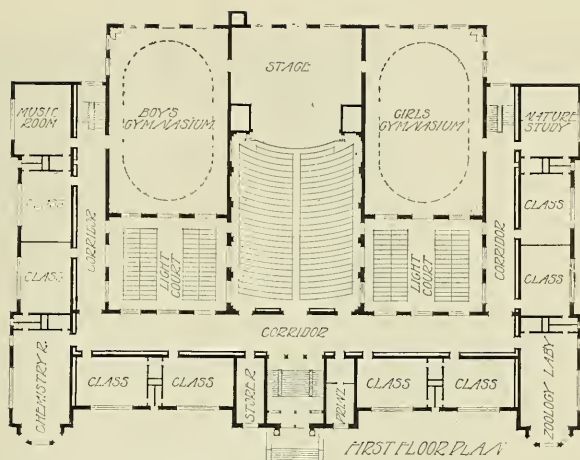
FROEBEL SCHOOL, GARY, IND. WM. B. ITTNER, ARCHITECT.



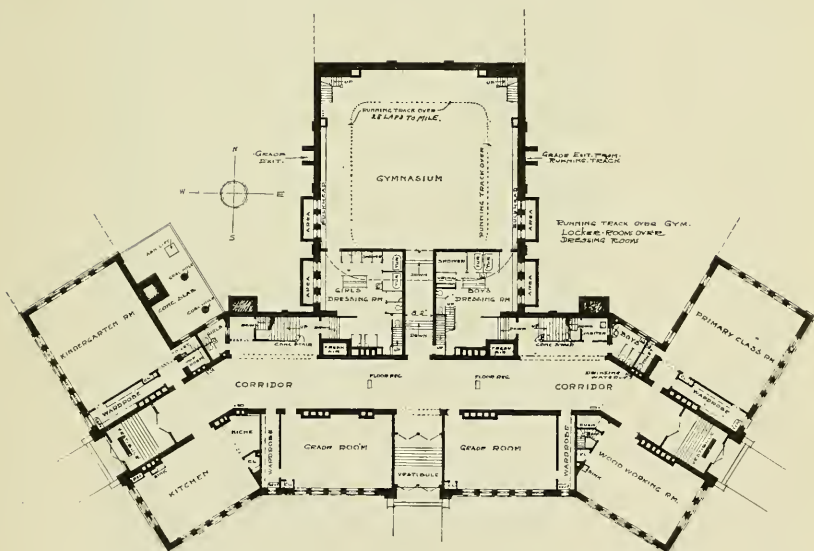
GROUND FLOOR PLAN

Courtesy of The Brickbuilder.

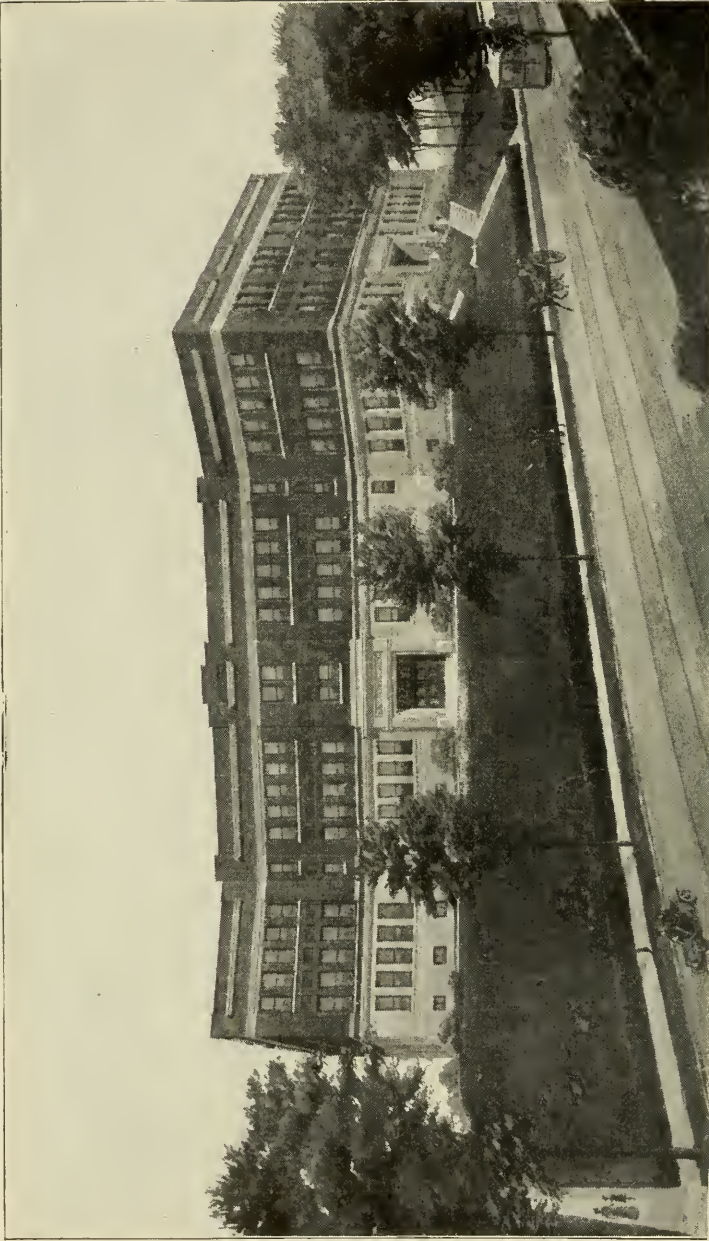
FROEBEL SCHOOL, GARY, IND.



FROEBEL SCHOOL, GARY, IND.

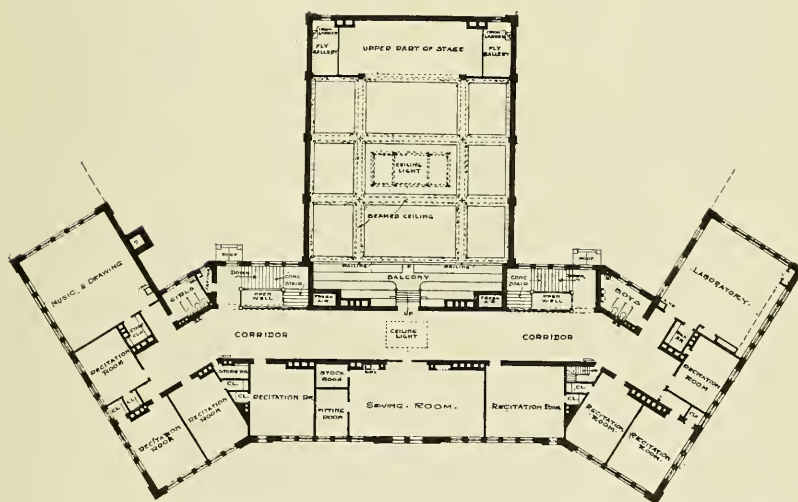
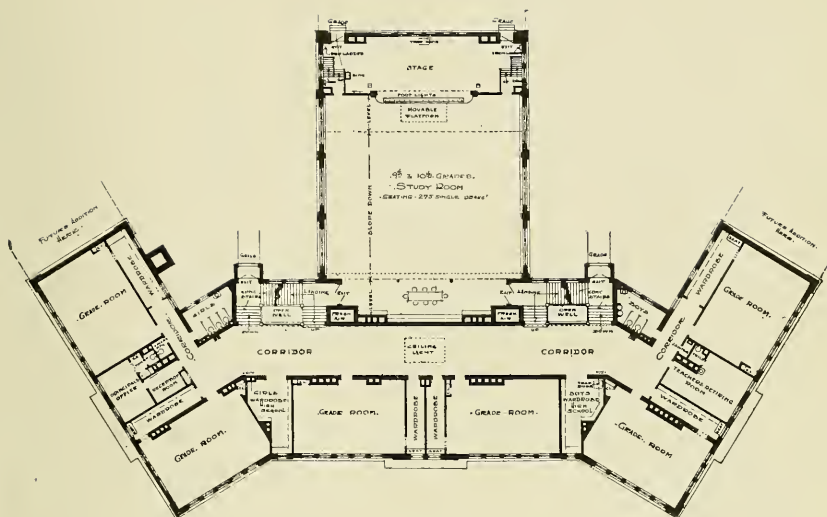


Courtesy of School Board Journal.
EAST AVENUE SCHOOL, KALAMAZOO, MICH. GROUND FLOOR.



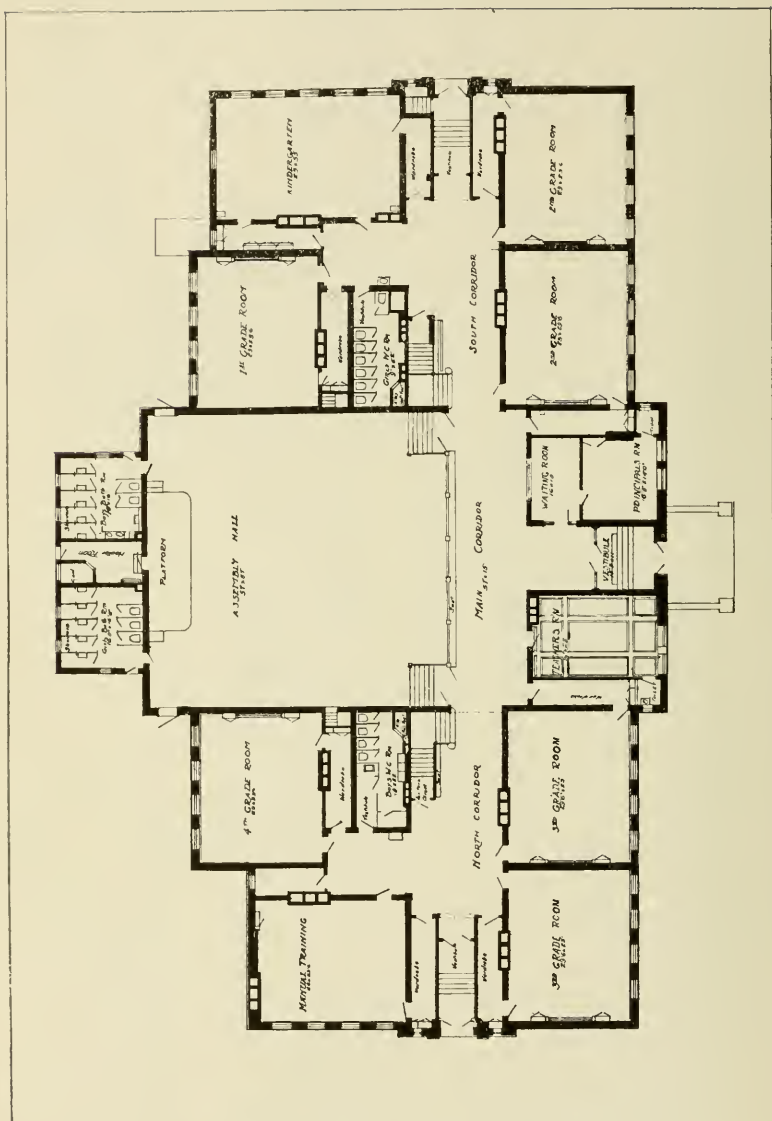
EAST AVENUE SCHOOL, KALAMAZOO, MICH. JOHN D. CHUBB, ARCHITECT.

Courtesy of School Board Journal.

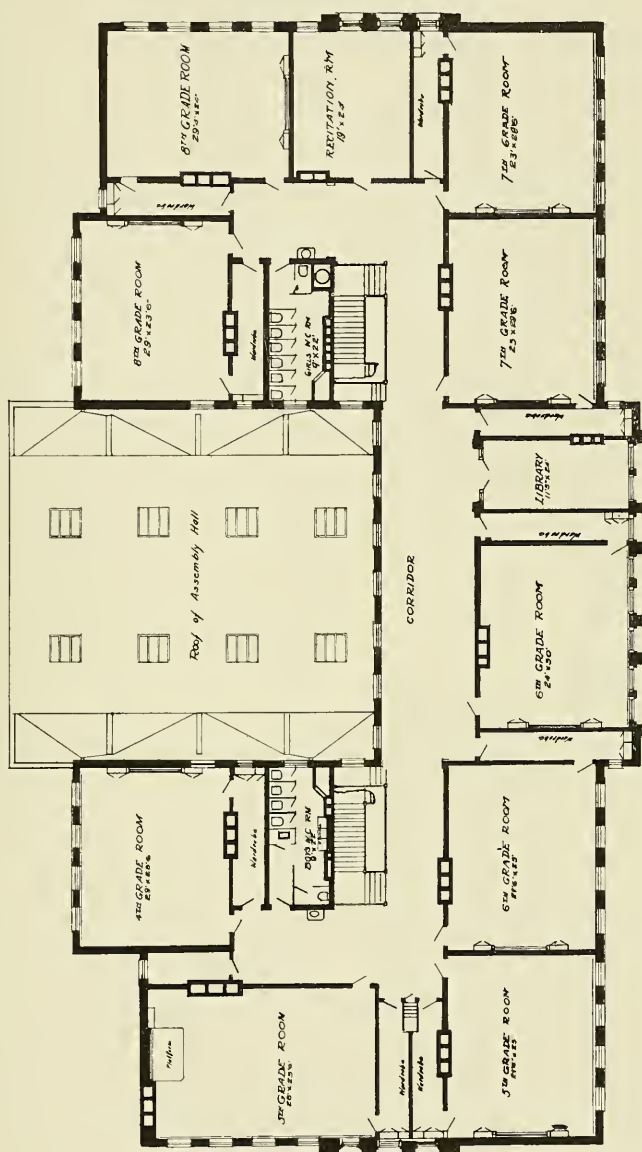


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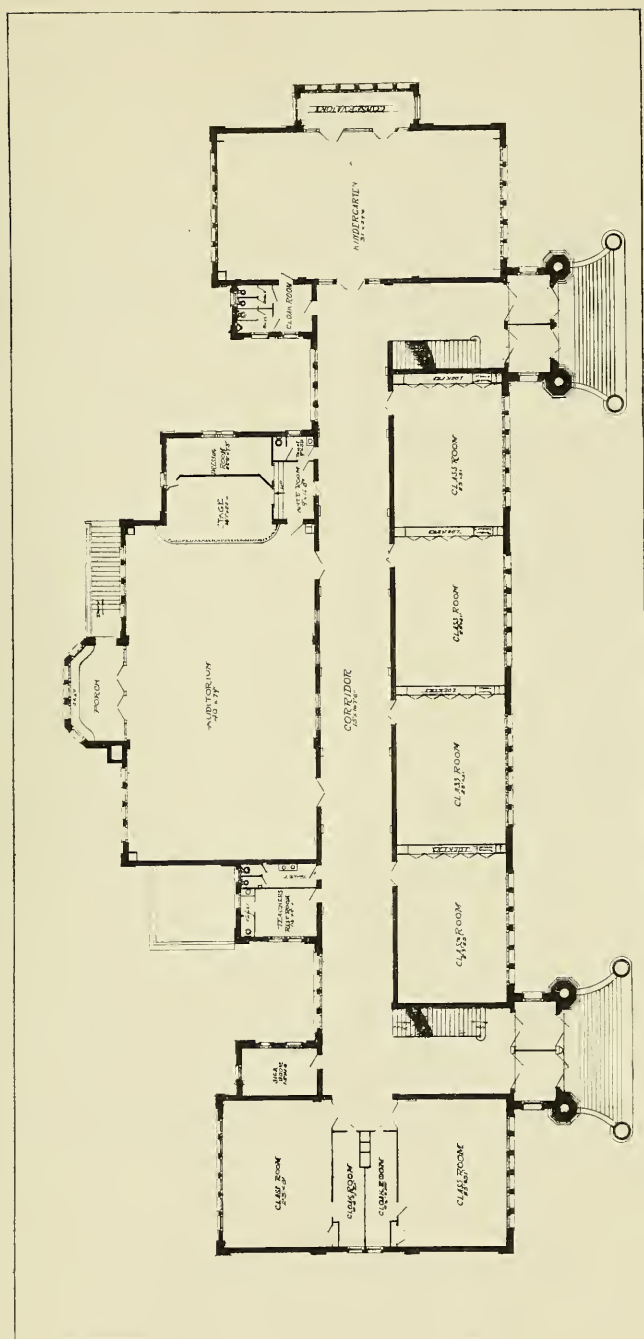
EAST AVENUE SCHOOL, KALAMAZOO, MICH.



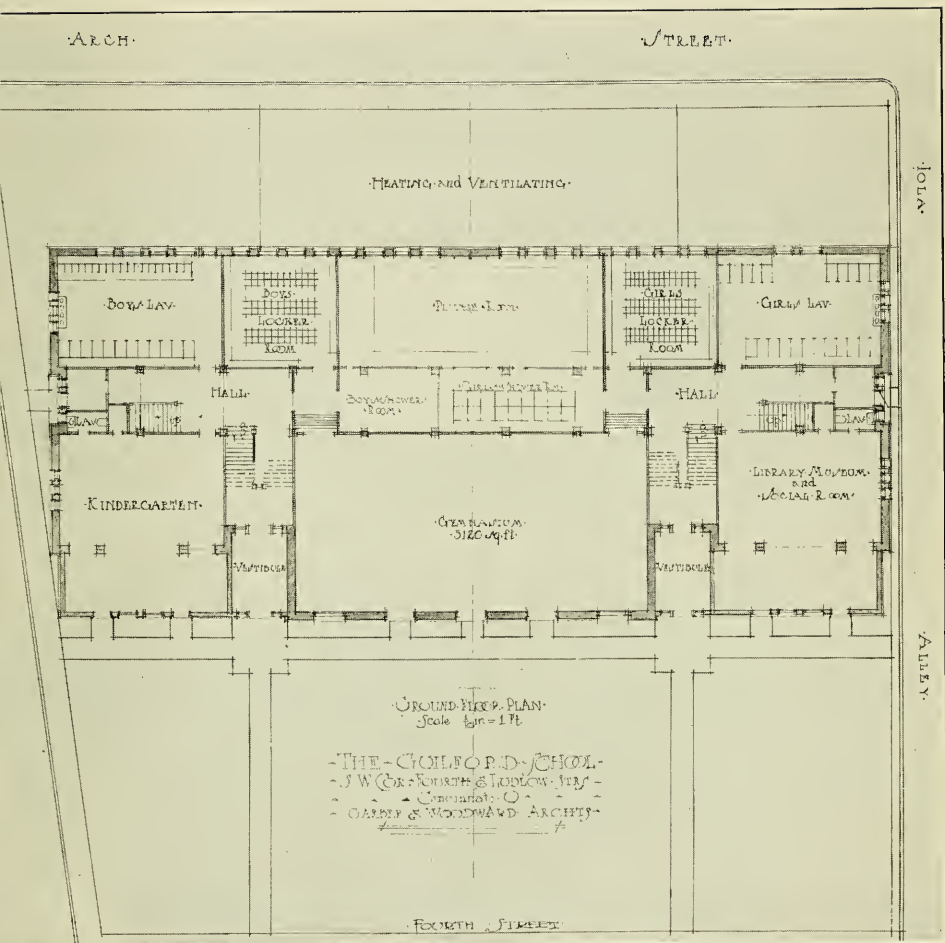
P. S. 23, ROCHESTER, N. Y. FIRST FLOOR. FOSTER WARNER, ARCHTCT.
Courtesy of University of Wisconsin.



P. S. 23, ROCHESTER, N. Y. SECOND FLOOR.

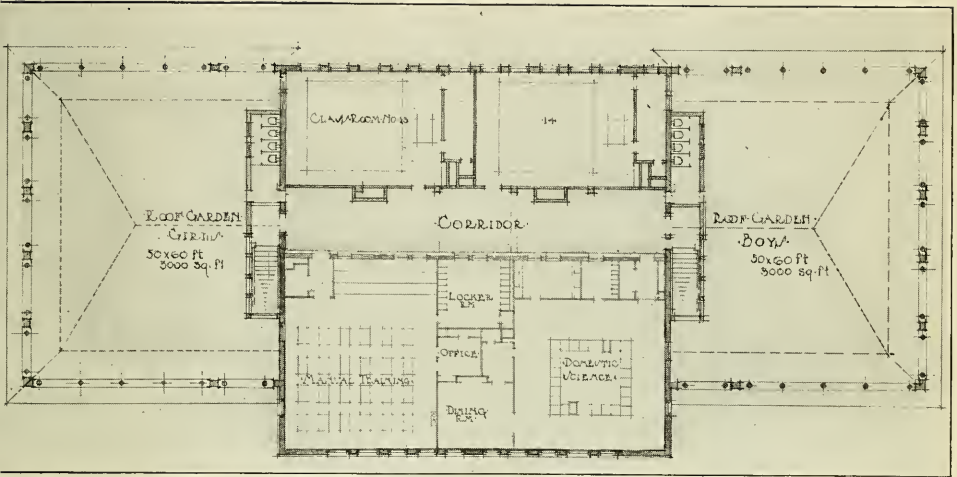


RUSK SCHOOL, HOUSTON, TEX. SECOND FLOOR.

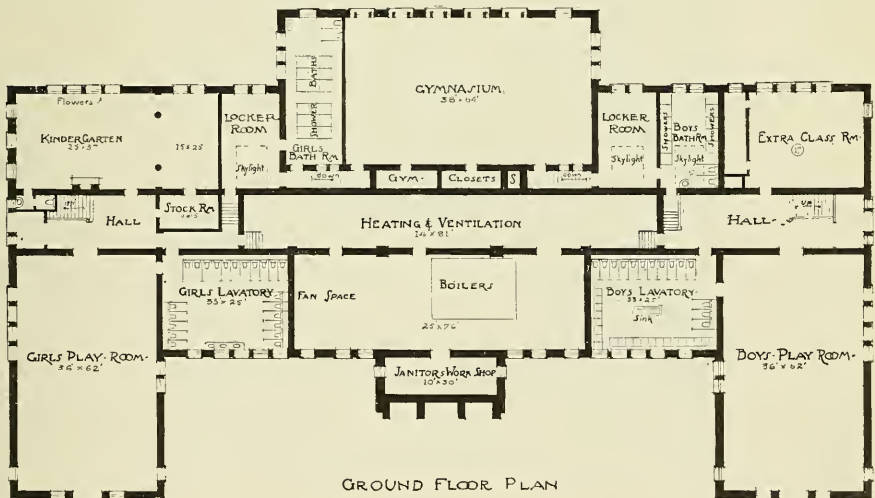


Courtesy of Cincinnati Board of Education.

GUILFORD SCHOOL, CINCINNATI, O. GARBER & WOODWARD, ARCHITECTS.



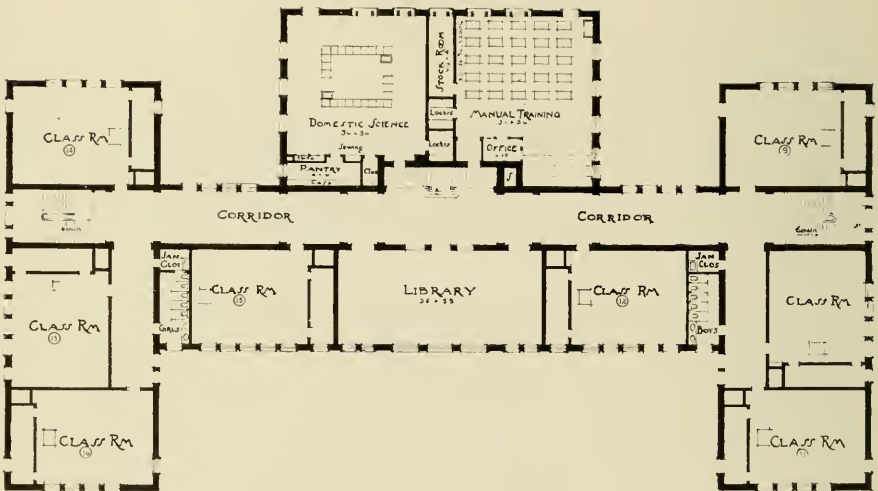
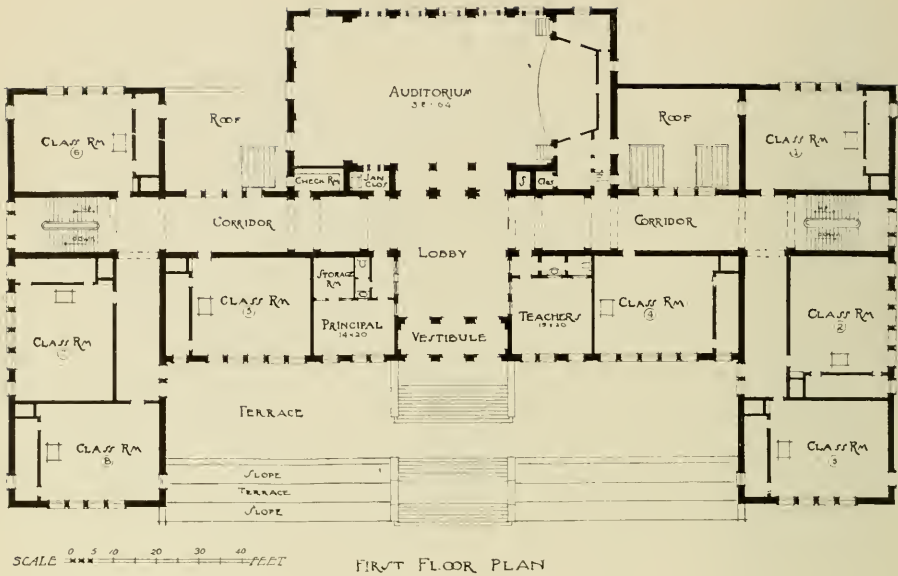
GUILFORD SCHOOL. THIRD FLOOR.



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

Courtesy of The Brickbuilder.

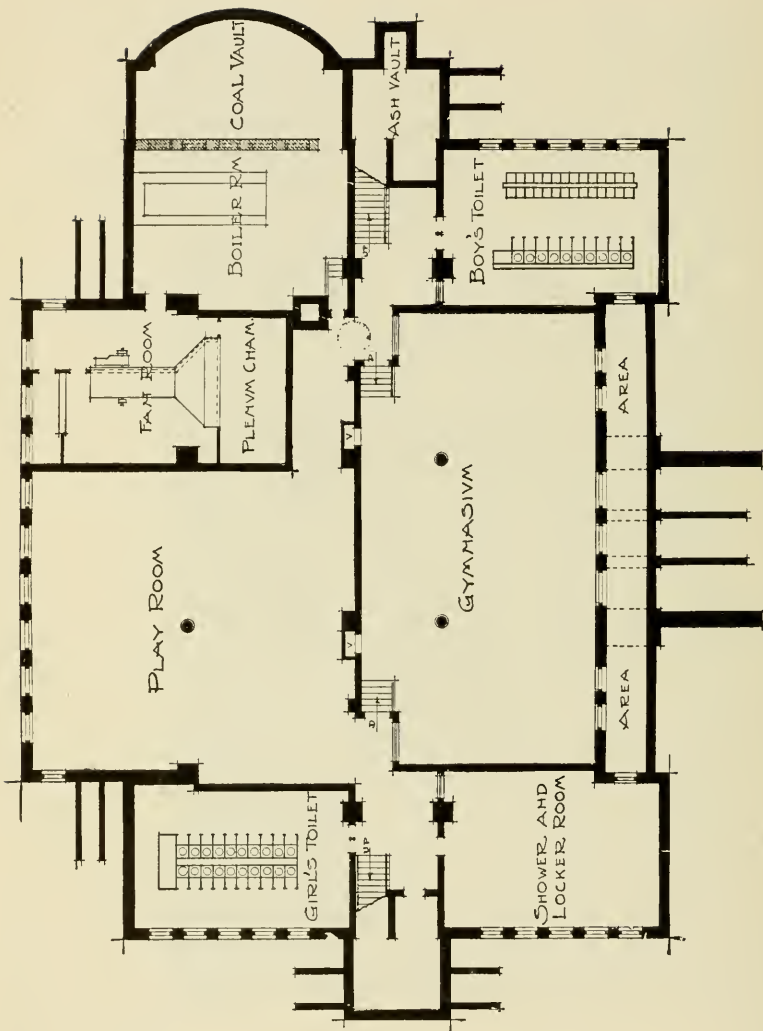
WESTWOOD SCHOOL, CINCINNATI, O. GARBER & WOODWARD, ARCHITECTS.



Second Floor.
WESTWOOD SCHOOL, CINCINNATI, O.



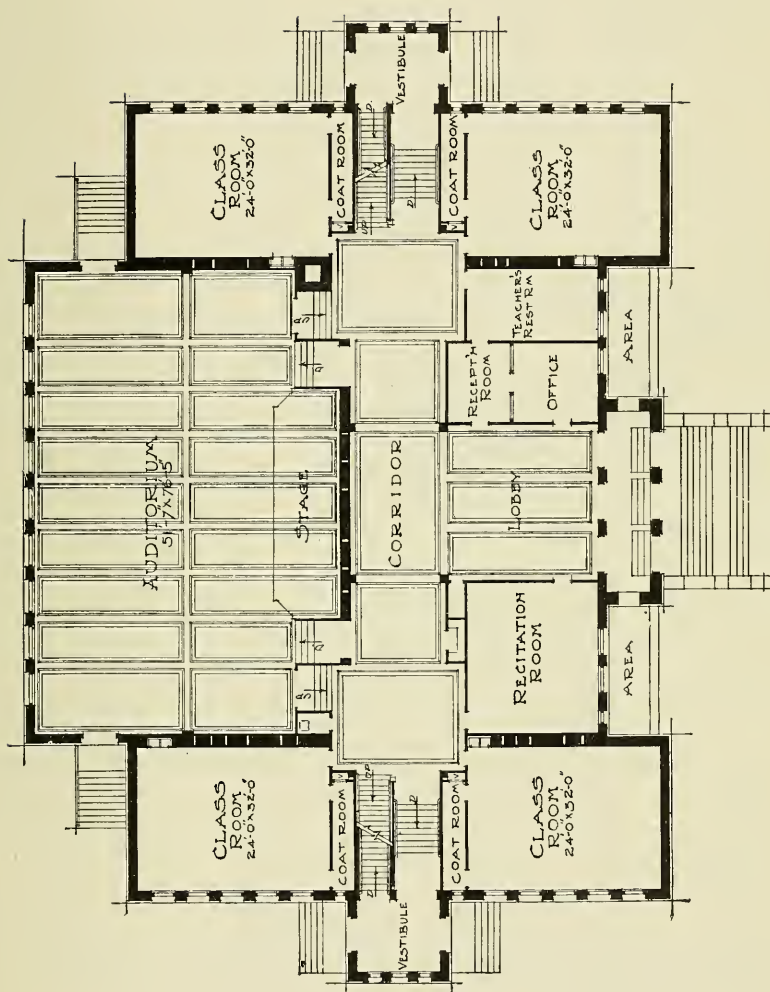
AN ENTRANCE, WESTWOOD SCHOOL.



BASEMENT PLAN
SCALE $\frac{1}{16}'' = 1'-0''$

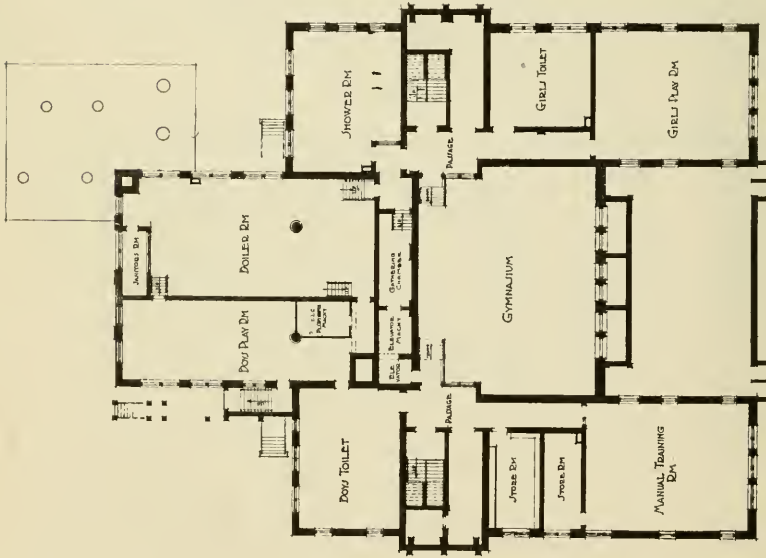
Courtesy of U. S. Bureau of Education.

COLUMBIA SCHOOL, CLEVELAND, O.

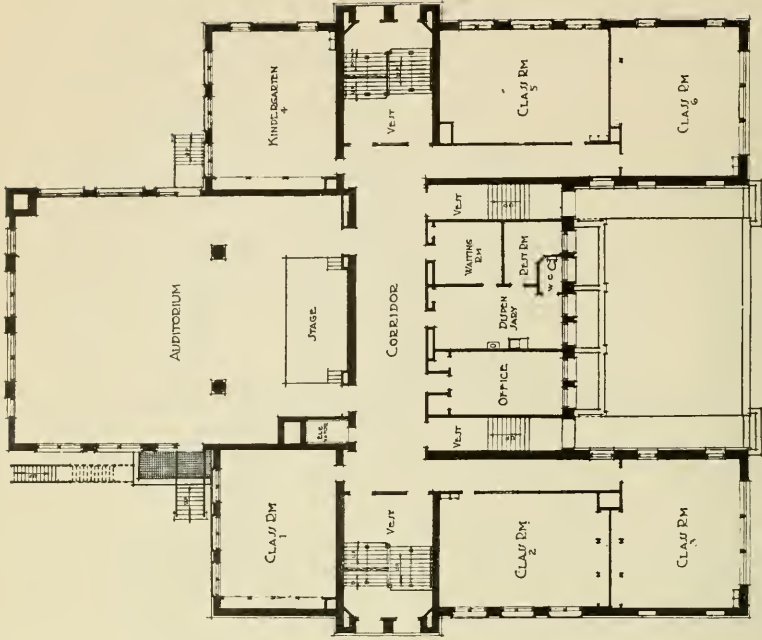


FIRST FLOOR PLAN
SCALE $\frac{1}{16}'' = 1'$

COLUMBIA SCHOOL, CLEVELAND, O.



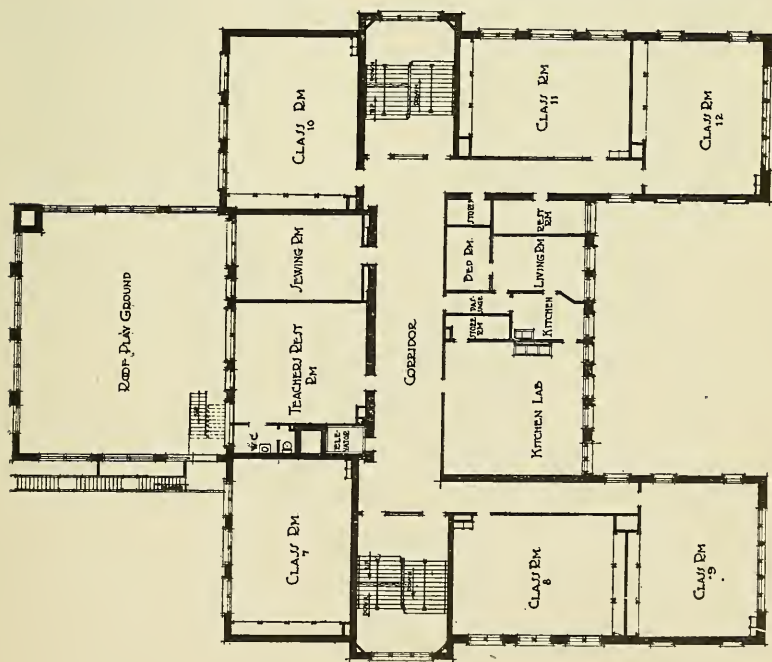
Basement



Courtesy of Cleveland Board of Education.

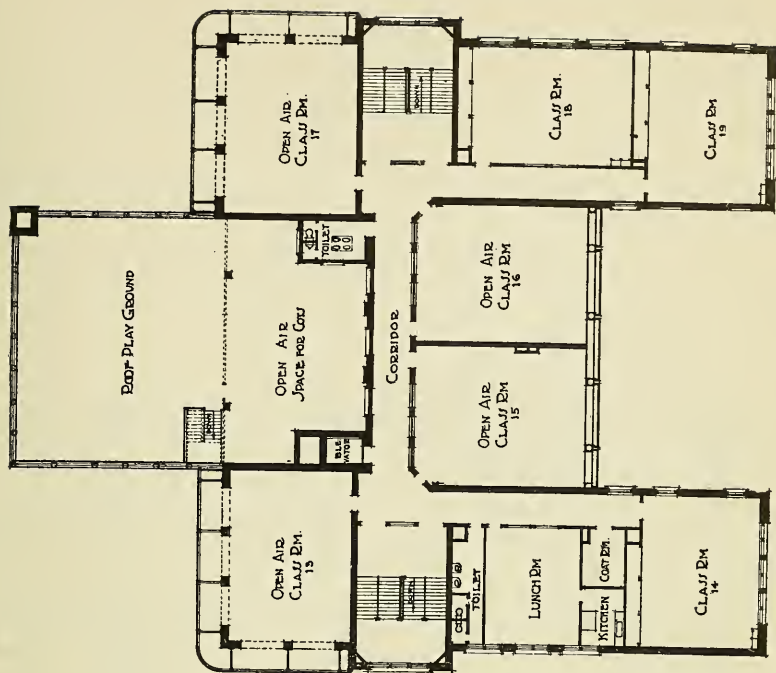
First Floor

EAGLE SCHOOL, CLEVELAND, O. F. S. BARNUM, ARCHITECT.

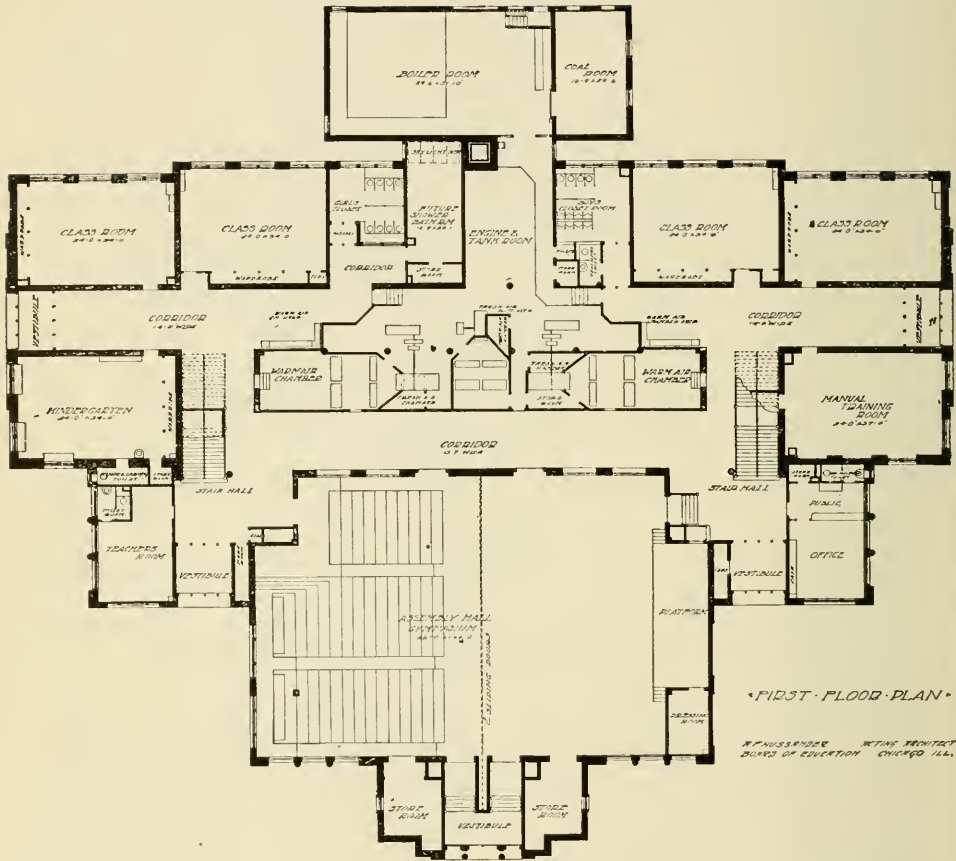


Second Floor

EAGLE SCHOOL, CLEVELAND, O.

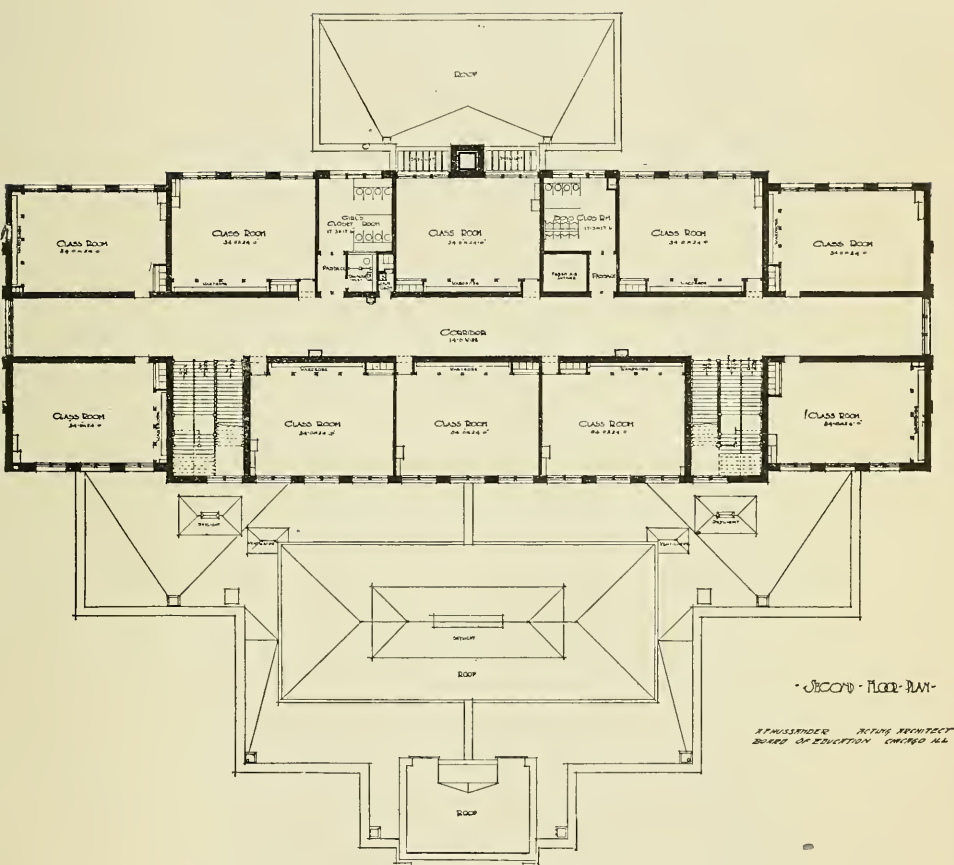


Third Floor

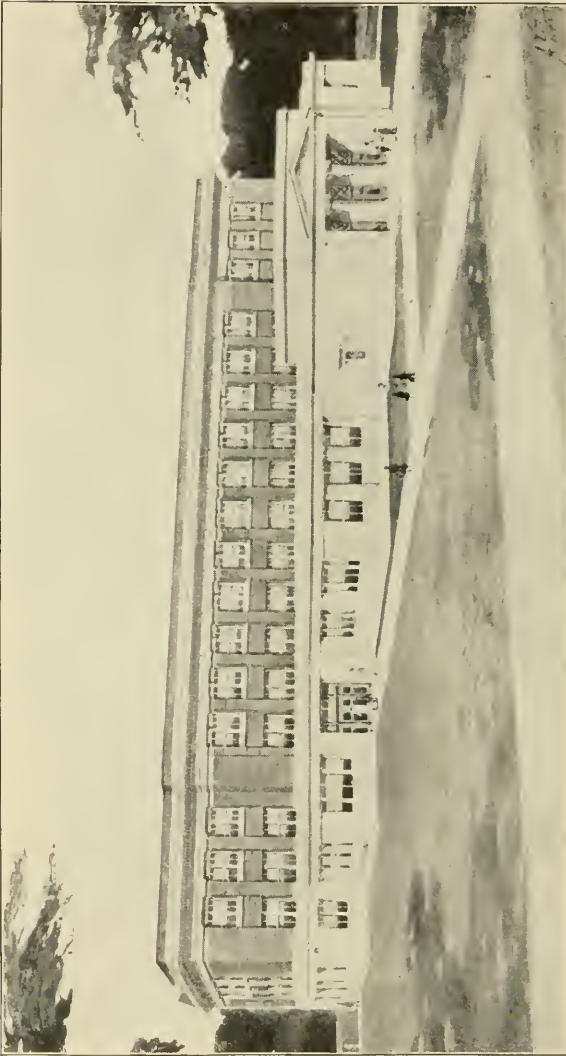


MOZART SCHOOL, CHICAGO, ILL.

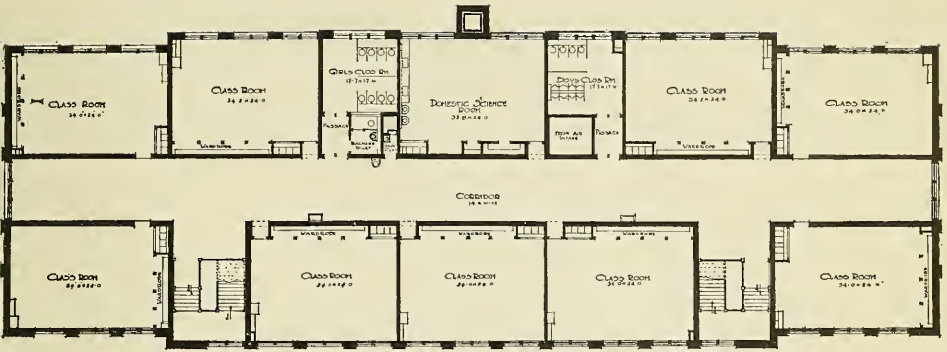
Courtesy of School Board Journal.



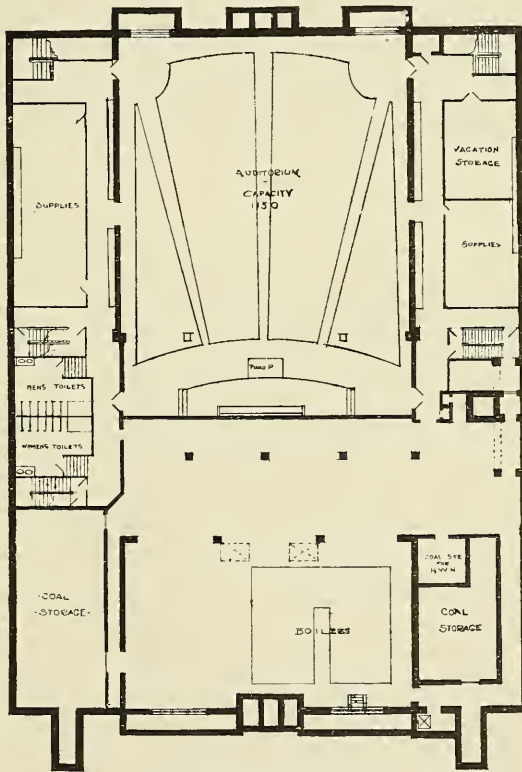
MOZART SCHOOL, CHICAGO, ILL.



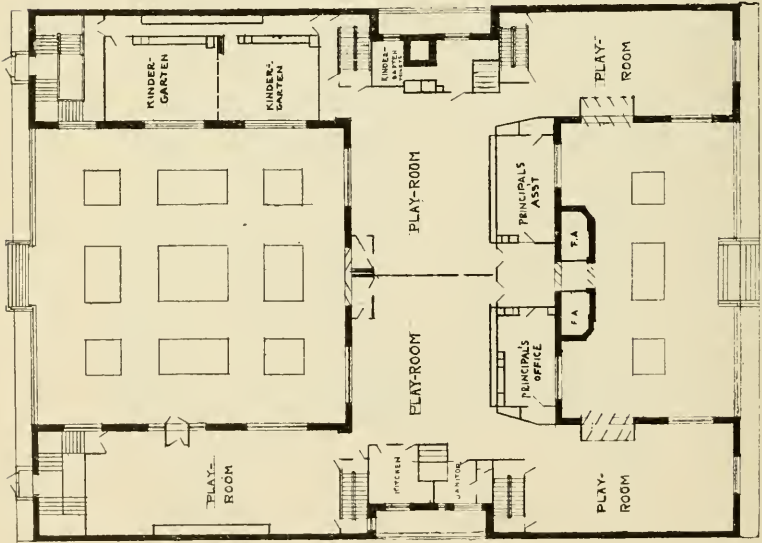
Courtesy of School Board Journal.
A CHICAGO SCHOOL OF THE MOZART TYPE. A. F. HUSSANDER, ARCHITECT.



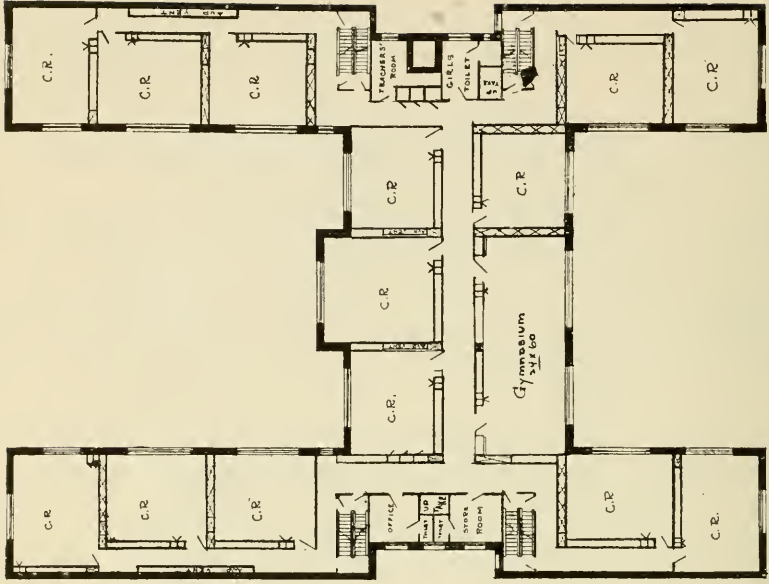
THIRD-FLOOR PLAN.
MOZART SCHOOL, CHICAGO, ILL.



Courtesy of New York Department of Education.
P. S. 95, MANHATTAN, NEW YORK CITY. BASEMENT.
C. B. J. SNYDER, ARCHITECT.



First Floor

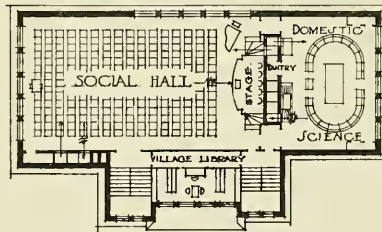
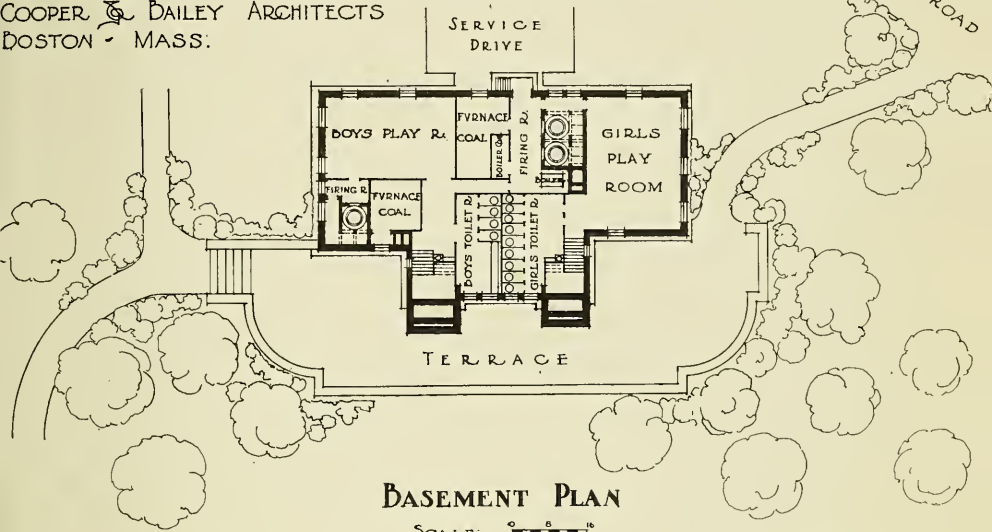


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