

Guide to this document

This is a fairly long document, with a brief Intro/Overview and then 10 chapters on the 10 separate buildings and/or significant additions. It is 105 pages in all.

You can advance page-by-page through the entire document if you want. The Intro/Overview begins on the next page, and the chapters follow.

If you are interested in one specific chapter, addition, or time period, I have inserted bookmarks into the document so that you can click on any of the links below to jump to any specific chapter, and from any chapter back to the chapters list below.

I hope you enjoy it, [and I welcome all corrections or additions, including personal memories and stories.](#)

[1. The first white wooden school, north end of town, about 1894 – 1930](#)

[2. The original 6-room red brick school, south end of town, about 1930 – 1945](#)

[3. The one-room school years, 1946 – 1952](#)

[4. The high school and gymnasium addition, 1952](#)

[5. The shop and music room addition, 1957](#)

[6. The cafeteria, kitchen, and hallway addition, 1962](#)

[7. The football lockers and two new shop rooms addition, 1966](#)

[8. The new grade school and girls' locker room addition, 1968](#)

[9. The new grade school complex to the north of the original school, 1981](#)

[10. The new high school building, 2016](#)

Introduction and overview to this document.

My brother Arrel had written up his own Kremlin School Days memories over the past few years, and making that available to others who might be interested was one of the reasons for the "Toews Brothers Kremlin" website that I developed (toewsbrotherskremlin.info); that document, and this one, are in the Kremlin School History section of the website. Arrel had also written up an extensive and well-documented history of the Town of Kremlin; that, and other interesting town history documents are in the Kremlin Town History section of our website. Both of his stories included some information about the buildings and additions at the Kremlin School, but he graduated in 1966 and did not know about or remember many of the later additions that I remembered. Also on our website is a section of my own work on the Garfield County One-Room Schools, with more to come on the one-room schools that eventually merged with Kremlin School. Things I learned about early one-room schools' history, including the fact that quite a few of those one-room school houses got moved to the Kremlin School along with their students in the late 1940s, got me further intrigued with the "complete" history of the Kremlin School buildings. This set of documents (files) here represents the fruits of my labors, to date. In addition to the two Kremlin Schools documents described here, there are links on our Schools webpage to scans of all the yearbooks from 1945 to 1969 (so far), to all of the senior photo panels, and to an interesting book of Kremlin School stories from alumni, called "Story Matters". If you have any interest in Kremlin and/or Kremlin Schools history, you will find much to like on our website!

Arrel's story is about his own personal memories, including lots that is of interest to all. For my "buildings history", I have focused only on the buildings, including very little of my own school days memories, or information about who my teachers and classmates were. That may be a separate document, to go along with Arrel's personal memories, at some later date. For my documents here, I have chosen to use early yearbook photos wherever possible, even when better later color photos are available. In some cases, a mixture of early black-and-white and later color photos are used for clarity. If you browse our scans of Kremlin yearbooks, you will find literally thousands of other interesting photos and memories that are NOT included in my stories here. **Browse the yearbooks and everything else on our webpages; enjoy the memories, or look back just to be amazed!**

A brief summary and introduction to the 10 chapters of "Myron's Kremlin School Buildings History" begins on the next page. At least take a look at this short summary, please; but I think you will enjoy the much greater detail and many photos that are in each of these chapters.

Highlighted in blue text throughout my chapters are bits and pieces where I know that I am in need of more and better information and memories. I hope that all who DO look through my individual chapters will pay attention to these places and send me any additional information, memories, or photos. Of course, any corrections that are needed to what I have written are also welcome. I have tried to acknowledge all the many people who have already helped me by providing their own memories and photos for each of the chapters. If your name is there already, THANK YOU again! If not, please send me some new information and I will acknowledge your help in my updates.

Kremlin School buildings and additions – a chapter for each, with history and photos

1. The first white wooden school. This school was located at the north end of town, on the east side of the same street as the later school that many of us knew and the current school buildings. This 4-room building was the school until the 1932-33 school year, when classes began in the 6-room red brick school, on the same street but at the south end of town.



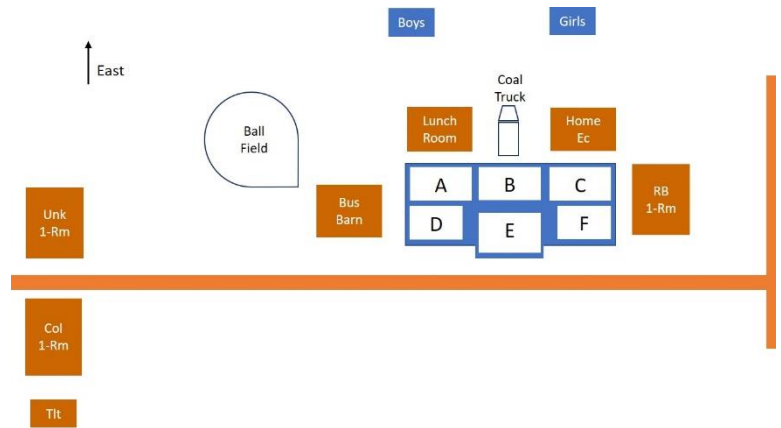
2. The six-room red brick school. This school was opened for the 1932-33 school year. The uses of the rooms changed with later additions, but it remained a part of the school until all the older school buildings were demolished in the summer of 2015.



In its earliest days, the younger grades were at the south end, three grades per room, and the higher grades were at the north end. When the high school and gymnasium were added in 1951, the original red brick school became the grade school.

3. The one-room school house expansion years.

Beginning in the late 1930s and up to 1949 or so, the area one-room country schools began to close, with students then attending the Kremlin town school. To make room for those students, several of the one-room school houses were moved from their original locations in the country and onto the school grounds. Those years ended in 1951 when the new high school and gymnasium were added. A diagram of the buildings on the school grounds at the peak of the one-room school house expansion years is shown here. Read the chapter for more details.



4. The high school and gymnasium addition (and changes in the red brick school uses). The high school and gymnasium (yellow in diagram) were added to the south end of the red brick building (blue in diagram) and began to be used at the end of the 1952 school year, with the grade school classes moving into the red brick school rooms (2). This addition was built to match the original school and it provided a kitchen and lunchroom and 2 classrooms on the west side (4A), science and home ec rooms at the south end (4B), the first indoor bathrooms and two sets of sports dressing rooms (4C) under the west bleachers of the gymnasium (4D), and a stage and two more smaller dressing rooms at the end of the gymnasium for use as an auditorium (4E).



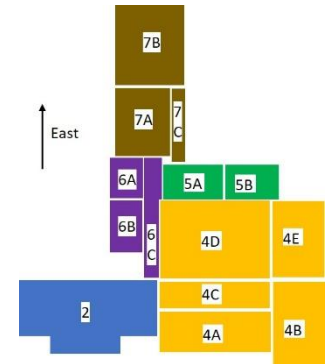
5. The shop and music room addition. For the 1957 school year, two rooms were added to the east side of the gymnasium (green in diagram). The north room was the new shop space, for both woodworking and some metal work. The south room was the first dedicated music room. Access to this addition was not covered, but with sidewalks from the area connecting the red brick school to the high school or from the north end or east side of the gymnasium.



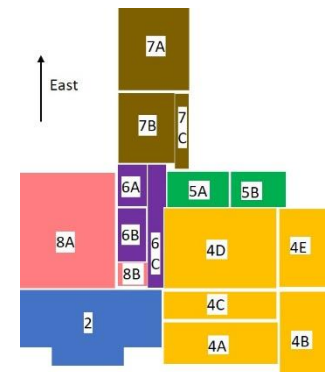
6. The new cafeteria and hallway addition. For the 1963 school year, a new addition was made to the north of the gymnasium. This addition (purple) included a large and modern kitchen (6A) and larger lunchroom (6B), plus a new covered hallway (6C) leading from the area connecting the high school to the red brick school and leading to the shop room (5A) at its east end. Trophy cases and senior photo panel displays were moved into this hallway.



7. New boys' locker rooms and two new large shop rooms addition. This addition (brown) was completed during the 1965-66 school year. Kremlin beginning football that year was a major impetus for the new locker rooms (7A), one for the home team, one for the visiting team, which opened to the football field to the north. Two new shop rooms, one for woodworking and one for metal work and small engines, were at the far east end of this addition (7B), plus a long hallway (7C) connecting the locker rooms and shops rooms to the hallway by the cafeteria and the previous shop room (5A). At this time, music moved into the previous shop room, and the previous music room (5B) became the kindergarten classroom – the first time that Kremlin had kindergarten since the first white wooden school years!



8. New grade school classrooms, in preparation for merger with Hillsdale, and a new girls' locker room. This was the final addition (pink) to the original red brick building, filling in the remaining space between the east side of the red brick building and the west side of the new cafeteria. For just part of the Spring 1968 semester, all of grades 1-8 from Kremlin were in the 4 new classrooms in 8A, 2 grades per room, and the former grade school rooms in the red brick building (2) took on new uses. With the Hillsdale merger for the 1968-69 school year, only grades 1-4 were in this addition, with grades 5-8 having class at Hillsdale. This addition also included a new girls' locker room (8B) in the previous space between the original red brick building (2) and the cafeteria and hallway addition (6B and 6C).



9. A separate new grade school building, and more, to the north of the high school. First came the Stewart swimming pool, then later a new grade school and cafeteria building to the north and east of the pool, in 1981. A new gymnasium was added to the east end of the grade school around 1988, and more buildings later. With this new building in Kremlin, the Hillsdale school buildings were no longer used.



10. More changes at the high school, followed by its demolition and a new high school building, 2016. The new grade school building led to many changes in uses of the rooms in the original school complex, now the high school plus grades 7 and 8. In 2015, the entire complex of buildings shown in the diagrams above was demolished and replaced by a new high school building.



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Chapter 1. The first white wooden school at the north end of town

Acknowledgements and thanks to those who contributed to this chapter:

My brother Arrel, Class of 1966, is the major contributor to this first chapter. As noted below, he compiled the photos and wrote what our family archives said about this school for his School Memories document, also on this website, and for his help with editing and style content suggestions.

Thanks to the author, unknown, of an earlier Kremlin School history that I obtained from Gini Zaloudek's collection of memorabilia for the 2001 Kremlin Town Centennial. Information there comes from a variety of first-hand memories that are documented there.

Some of the photos came from the Zaloudek building, some from a Kremlin yearbook, and some from our collection of old family photos. Unknown people selling Kremlin postcards on eBay also made important contributions.

I must also thank my father, David A. Toews, for sharing his early grade school memories of this school with my oldest brother Galen, now deceased; and an equally big thank you to Galen for having written up clear notes of our dad's memories.

Thanks also to my dad and everyone else involved for saving his grade school group photos from this early school to make them available for me and this document.

1.1. About the building(s)

This first chapter of “my” (Myron’s) Kremlin School Buildings History was actually written first by my brother Arrel and has been extracted from his “School Memories” document, also on this website, with his permission. I have edited it somewhat, to fit the purposes of my own document and to make it consistent with my other chapters.

The first known school building in Kremlin was at the north end of town in Block 2 on the east side of F Street, facing west. This is the same street where the later, and current, school was/is located; this first school was one block south of the current Kremlin post office. Abbie Seapy, first grader 1902, said the school building was at the south end of the school “grounds”.

It was a white wooden building and T-shaped. Interesting to me, it looks like it might have been about as big as the 6-room red brick school at the south end of town that later replaced it (detailed in Chapter 2). But records and/or memories indicate that it had only four rooms, compared to the six in the newer school. According to the “Kremlin History” booklet hand-written by our Uncle Jacob Toews and his classmates when he was a Junior at Kremlin High School, this building was built in 1900, partially by Mr. Dobrey, who also built a lumberyard in Kremlin, and who chartered the first Bank of Kremlin in 1900. This was 7 years before OK became a state in 1907.

F. W. Zaloudek started attending the school in 1909, after first learning enough English to qualify. His native language was “Bohemian”, and his parents hired two young men to live with them and help the entire family learn English. F. W. said that the school when he started was a one-room building, with a single teacher for all 8 grades. then some unknown years later, it was expanded to two rooms; and then later to three rooms, with expansion to include the first two years of high school. F. W. said that in the late teens and early twenties, the primary grades used the First Baptist Church, at the corner of 5th and A Streets, basically caddy-corner to the south and west from the town school. [In his interview, F. W. Zaloudek says that there was a stable or barn for horses between the two outhouses back behind the school, right after mentioning the brick school being built in 1929. He talks about both the white wooden school and the later brick school at this part of the interview, and it is not clear at which school the horse barn he mentioned was located.](#)

Marie Wuerflein Meyer started school in the “German school” in the First Baptist Church. She attended school there for about three years, then transferred to the town school for her remaining years. Marie graduated in 1933, so her first year would presumably have been the fall of 1920. Marie was in the first senior class to graduate from the new 6-room brick school at the south end of F Street.

Our father, David A Toews, started kindergarten in Kremlin in 1921; he said that his kindergarten and 1st-3rd grades were in the First Baptist Church, across the F Street on the west side, and a bit south from the school; this is Block 11. Using this church as a school was apparently a long-standing situation, based on the memories of others above. He then attended 4th grade in the white wooden school building, and he was in this building through his freshman year, 1931-32. Dad remembers this as the year that children from some of the smaller rural schools began attending Kremlin School; other records indicate that this is the time that Wild Horse one-room school shut down. That seems the likely reason for the new and presumably larger 6-room red brick school at the south end of town being built that year, with its first use for the 1932-33 school year. We do not know for certain whether the “German” school in the Baptist Church was only for German-speaking students, to help them learn enough English to transfer to the regular school, and there were other K-3 students in the regular school, or whether ALL K-3 students had school in the Baptist Church.

Note that there were only 8 grades at Kremlin for many years; students who wanted to complete high school had to do that at Enid High School. As years passed, the Kremlin School expanded to include 10 and then 11 grades, but students still had to go to Enid to earn their diploma. This apparently changed in 1932-33, when state accreditation standards increased the minimal number of students per school, and the new brick schoolhouse at the south end of F Street was completed to meet state standards, graduating its first class in May of 1933. We believe that our dad finished his high school years, sophomore through senior years, in that new red brick school; he graduated with the Class of 1935, the third class to graduate from that school. Our mother, who attended the Columbia one-room school for grade school, had all of her high school years in the new red brick school, graduating with the Class of 1936.

Dad said that the white wooden school had 4 rooms in his days, and that his 4th grade class was in the room on the south side of the "tail" of the T-shaped building that stuck out to the east. The school was cold in the winter and the children would sit around the stove to study. Traditional classes were taught. Extracurricular activities included a glee club and baseball and basketball teams, which played outdoors until the Community Hall was built in 1933, perhaps the first year after the new red brick school was completed.

1.2. Photos

The photo here, from the early 1910s and hanging in the Zaloudek Building, likely shows this first school under construction, or more likely being expanded-- note the ladder on the roof. My best guess, and a guess only, is the original one-room school described by F. W. Zaloudek is the center of the building with the classic steeple or bell tower. The two sections to the left and right are likely the expansions to two rooms and then three rooms remembered by F. W. The final expansion to four rooms would have been the extension to the back (east) shown in the two photos on the next page.



The sepia photo to the right is of the student body and teachers in front of original Kremlin School building, also around 1912, and copied from the displays in the Zaloudek Building in Kremlin. Somewhere in this photo should be the young F. W. Zaloudek. This seems a very large group of students for just 4 rooms, but likely at this time at least the first 3-4 grades were meeting in the First Baptist Church. Note the bare soil around the sidewalk; but at least there is a bit of sidewalk compared to the photo above.



Here is another view of this school, from the 1982 Garfield County History volumes. The same photo, though cropped, is in the 1994 Kremlin "history" yearbook, where it is indicated as "the first frame building". Note that a new addition at the back/east end of the building is clearly visible, along with an outhouse and what is presumably a basketball goal.



The bottom photo here shows children outside the schoolhouse, with outbuildings at the back, we presume toilets. The postcard says that it shows the original school building and celebrates the continuing existence of Kremlin. Note that in this photo, the east end has been extended yet further to make more classrooms, compared to the photo above. In the top photo, the building ends at the back chimney, but in this photo, the building extends "3 windows" further back. You can also see the different shade of the shingles that were added for the new extension, and perhaps in two phases – some dark shingles further left (east) than the chimney, perhaps the back room extended; and then lighter shingles over the furthest east two windows, likely another one or two classrooms added. This photo is also in the Garfield County History volumes from 1982.



How did this school building end? We have family interviews saying that the barn on our farm was hit by lightning and burned to the ground in 1935, and that our Grandpa George P. Toews, who may have been on the school board at that time, purchased the school building and tore it down and used the lumber to build a new barn on our farm. Our dad said that it was finished in time for him to be given a surprise birthday party in the new barn on a Sunday afternoon close to October 20, 1935. So even though it was gone long before I was born, I spent a good bit of time in that barn built from the boards that used to be this Kremlin school building.

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Finally, here are three different class photos that we are fairly confident were taken outside the school building above. We clearly recognize our dad, David A. Toews, as third from the left in the front row of the top photo. Knowing his later classmates, we should be able to at least tentatively identify others.

Assuming that our dad is maybe 10 in the top photo, these student photos would likely have been from 1926-1928 or so.

I now believe that all three of these photos are of our dad's class, different years. John Wuerflein and Helena Janzen were his classmates, and I think I can see all three of these people that I knew in all three photos. What fun!

[Help from anyone in identifying any more of the students in these photos would be wonderful.](#)



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Chapter 2. The original 6-room red brick school

Acknowledgements and thanks to those who contributed to this chapter:

Thanks to the author, unknown, of an earlier Kremlin School history that I obtained from Gini Zaloudek's collection of memorabilia for the 2001 Kremlin Town Centennial. Information there comes from a variety of first-hand memories that are documented there.

Gerry Toews Reimer, my cousin, Class of 1950, by phone, email, text, and in person

Joan Zaloudek Markwell, Class of 1950, in person and through Peggy Smith Guthrie Harris

Vernon Janzen, first grade 1937, by phone from Reedley, California, and through his published memoir

John Regier, Class of 1951, by phone and by email, from Reedley, California

John Richey, Class of 1951, (deceased during this project), by phone, mail, and in person

Bertha Toews Thomas, Class of 1952, by phone, email, and in person

Dorothy Voth Gray, my cousin, Class of 1954, (deceased), and her son and his cousins, who gave me access to her photo albums and early yearbooks after she died; these provided invaluable documentation

My brother Arrel Toews, Class of 1966, for help with editing and style content suggestions

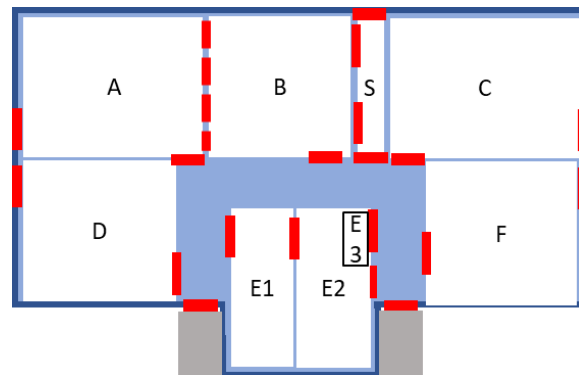
2.1. Overview of the building

This school was built at the south end of Kremlin, to replace the former white wooden school at the north end of Kremlin. It was in Block 43 on the east side of F Street; this block is shown as "School" already on a 1906 plat map, even though the school was not there until much later. We know that this school building graduated its first class in 1933, but we are not certain exactly when it was completed. In a summary of a taped interview, F. W. Zaloudek said that this school was built in 1929. Remember that Kremlin students had to go to Enid High for their senior year for many years; thus it is possible that school started in this building in 1929, but that 1932-33 was the first year that there was a senior class and graduation there.

An early picture of the first red brick school house is shown to the right, along with a layout diagram of the rooms below. The layout diagram is reasonably to scale on the outside dimensions, copied from a nice overhead view of the school in 2013. The original school was described in a newspaper article from 1939 about Kremlin (from Gerry Toews Reimer, below) as "thoroughly modern", "accommodates 128 students from 180 square miles", "evenly divided between the grade and high schools", and "with three busses".



A thoroughly modern school houses 128 students evenly divided between the grade and high schools with three busses covering an area of 180 square miles to bring the students into Kremlin.



the attractive brick building of the Kremlin school which accomodates 128 students from its 180 square mile school district territory which is combed daily by three school buses. (News-Eagle Photos)

1929, when we now believe this school may have been built, was the beginning of the Great Depression, so money was tight. Nonetheless, Marie Wuerflein Meyer's father, who was on the school board at this time, held out for at least 6 rooms for this new school, not just the 4 rooms that were being replaced from the white wooden school building at the north end of town; he was considered by many to be "too extravagant"!

In his interview, F. W. Zaloudek says that there was a stable or barn for horses between the two outhouses back behind the school, right after mentioning the brick school being built in 1929. He talks about both the white wooden school and the later brick school at this part of the interview, and it is not clear which school the horse barn he mentioned was located.

Below are color photos of some of the architectural “adornments” of the building; these photos were taken just a few days before the original building and the many other later buildings were demolished at the end of the 2015 school year. I am not certain what these were made of, but they have stood the test of time! These photos also show that the bricks were not all red, but that some dark gray or black bricks were nicely intermixed.

The new building left no doubt about the Kremlin School District number – 18! We all knew this from grade one on.



2.2. Room layouts

First, a bit about the building overall. Rooms A and B were really one long room, but with a removable or fold-up divider between them that was usually in place, making them two separate rooms. Gerry Toews Reimer and John Regier both mentioned a folding door or divider of some sort to separate these rooms, but that could be removed to make one larger room. The room indicated as S was the stage in the original building, elevated a couple steps from the classroom floor; thus, removing the divider between A and B made a nice-sized “auditorium” for school performances. Larger school events were held at the Community Hall instead, a much larger facility, but several blocks to the north. There were doors for access to the stage from the front, at both sides of the south wall in room B, photo below. There was also a door onto the stage from the hallway to the west. For things like graduations or award ceremonies, students could have gone on and off the stage from room B; for plays, actors could have entered from the hallway. There may have also been one or two doors onto the stage from Room C; I am not certain about this. And there was a door from the stage to the outside and the back of the school, at the east end; this provided access to the coal chute and the basement boiler used for heat.



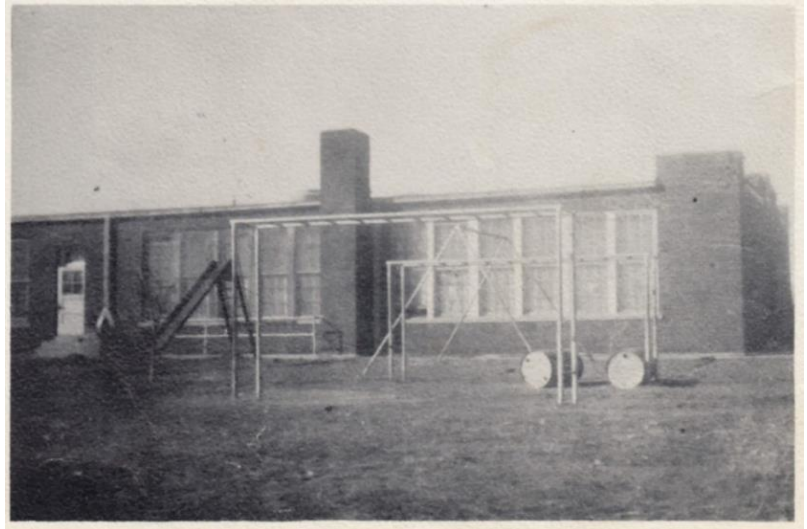
The top photo here from the 1952 yearbook provides the widest view of the entire stage end of Room B. The banner on the curtains is from the class of 1935, our mother's graduation year. The two doors onto the stage show. There is a piano to the left, consistent with this room being used as the music room and for programs. There is also a nice view of the wood floors. One row of students are sitting on benches in front of the stage, the second row are standing on the floor in front of the stage; the back row may be standing on the stage. The bottom photo, also from the 1952 Yearbook, does a better job of showing the piano and the height of the stage.



The photo to the right from the 1946 yearbook, of the “Commercial” classroom, could be the removable divider between Rooms A and B, but I am not certain. Everyone remembers Typing and Commerce being taught in Rooms E1 and E2 “in their day”; but they also remember Rooms E1 and E2 having a permanent divider with windows in between. Rooms E1 and E2 and the dividing wall between them is described in more detail below.

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Below Room B was a basement or cellar that housed the coal-fired boiler that heated the water to generate the steam that was pumped to the radiators in each classroom, to provide heat in the winter. There was a coal chute going from the outside into the east end of the cellar; one early student said the truck could dump an entire truck-load of coal directly into the basement, from which the janitor then had to shovel the coal into the burner of the boiler. There was a door from the east side of the stage to access the outside also, as shown to the left in the photo of the back of the school from the 1954 yearbook; this was presumably the route for access from the inside of the building to the cellar below. There seem to have been steps outside running down to the cellar, from south to north; the guard-rail to keep kids from falling in is visible in the photo from 1954, but this may have been added AFTER coal was no longer used to heat the school; I



have no earlier photos of the back of the school. There may also have been steps going down to the cellar from the stage inside the building, but there are no clear photos. The cellar was as large as Room B above it, according to Roy Sanders; see the outside door to the south of that room (middle set of 5 windows) and the smokestack from the coal burner at the north end of that room. Early students remember being able to get out of some class time if they would go to the cellar to shovel coal. The janitor's space was also in the cellar, and students remember hanging out down there with the janitor for as long as they could get away with it. Roy Sanders remembered the janitor's tool area as being about 8 feet wide and at the south end of the cellar. One said that boys who smoked could smoke down there. The radiators that used the steam from the boiler to heat the classrooms are nicely shown in the photo extract to the right, from a 1953 yearbook photo.



The top photo, of the back of the school, also shows that Room A was longer than Room B to its south; Room A shows 6 windows, whereas Rooms B and D each have 5 (see first photo in this chapter). The same was true for Room C having 6 windows; the photo below, from a Dorothy Voth photo album, probably 1950-1951, shows the 6 windows at the south end of the school (left in the photo). The extra space in Rooms A and C, or the smaller space in Rooms D and F, was because of the entry hallways coming in from the west, using up the equivalent of "one window" of classroom space.

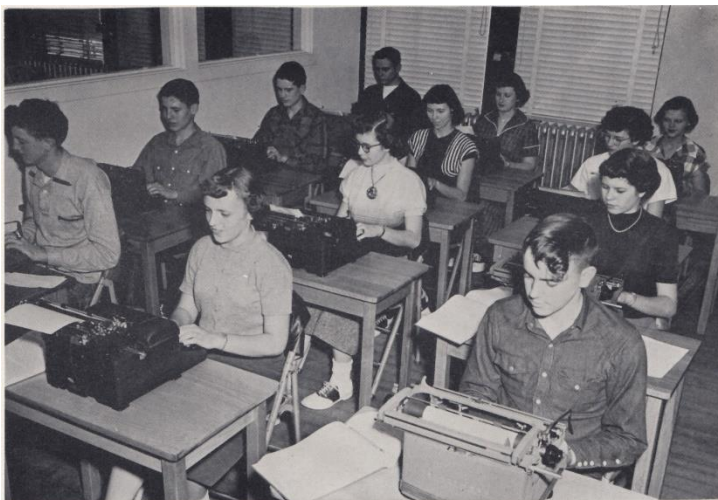


Room E was similarly interesting. It was about the same size as the other rooms, but it had a permanent divider running east and west to separate it into two rooms, with at least two windows, maybe three, allowing each room to be seen from the other. I document this dividing wall more than most school features, because I have found very few people who remember it, even though photos show that it was there, even in their later years. There was a door between the two parts of the room, allowing passage between the two rooms. For at least some years, Typing was taught on one side and Bookkeeping and Shorthand on the other; thus, a single teacher could be on the Bookkeeping side while students practiced Typing, or on the Typing side while students worked on their Bookkeeping. The "Commercial Class" photo on page 3 and the several photos below from later yearbooks show this wall, with three of the five west windows in E2 (south side), leaving 2 outside windows for E1 (north side); thus E2 was larger than E1. The windows and door in the dividing wall can be seen in several of the photos below. These photos are not from the earliest days of the red brick school, but they nicely show the layout of Room E as it was at least into the 1960s and perhaps beyond, and the way that early students remember.

The photo to the right, from the 1960 yearbook, would be Room E2 (south room) looking to the northwest corner. This is where you can see three windows in E2; and through the window in the dividing wall, you can see the two windows that would have been in E1



NEWSPAPER STAFF



Typing Class

Larry Sowle, Dean Ruth, Don Chelf, Darryl Hays, Dorothy Voth, Dorothy Rickabaugh, Helen Gaskley, Wanda Travis, Clyde O'Connor, Sylvia Kirkpatrick, Dorothy Long, Rubena Teewe.

The photo to the left, from the 1953 yearbook, is looking to the southwest in Room E1 (north room), showing only TWO west windows in this room; two dividing wall windows are visible, with the left window seeming larger than the right (west end) window. Typing in E1 (north room) is also clearly

The photo to the right from the 1954 yearbook is looking into north-east corner of E2 (south room), with two dividing wall windows and and then what appears to be a blackboard showing. You can see into E1 (north room) through the window.



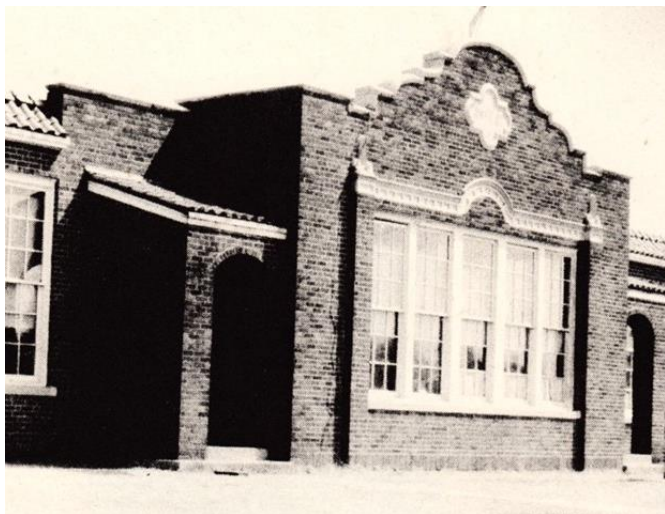
The Bookkeeping Class photo to the right, from the 1953 yearbook, MAY be taken from the south entrance of E2, facing north into E1, with the east end door in the divider wall to the right and the north door into E1 showing



The photo to the right, from the 1958 yearbook, is looking into the southwest corner of E1 (north room). You can see the west dividing wall window, and through the window you can see the west windows in E2 (south room).

The photo below, from 1946 yearbook, is of the OUTSIDE of Rooms E1 and E2, between the two front entrances. It nicely shows different window "treatments" and "looks" for the left TWO (north) windows and right THREE (south) windows of

The photo below, from the 1952 yearbook, again shows different window "looks" for the left TWO (north) windows (open at top and bottom) and right THREE (south) windows of Room E (closed), consistent with the different sizes of these rooms.



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Room E2 also included the space for the original office, indicated as E3 in my room layouts, and very small. Gerry and John Regier both confirmed that the original office was to the left as you came in the south front door. Arrel remembers a storage room in this area in the early 1960s, for pop and school supplies; but he thinks it way too small of a room to have ever been an office. Joan Zaloudek remembered the office being in the southeast corner of Room D, not in E2; so perhaps to the left in the NORTH hallway, not the SOUTH hallway? If so, we do not remember or have photos of any remnants of an office there.

Rooms A and D had a coat closet (always called a "cloak room"!) at the north end, with a door at each side. The first two photos below show these for Room A; the left photo, from the 1960 yearbook, nicely shows both doors; the right photo, from the 1957 yearbook, shows the bookcases on the east wall and the coats hanging on the wall through the left door into the cloak room.



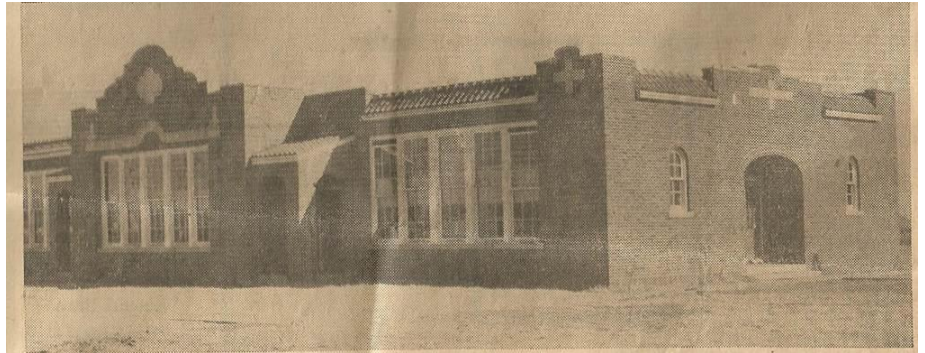
I did not remember the cloak room in Room D, my 5-6 grade room, but the left photo below, from the 1961 yearbook, shows that it was in fact there. Similarly, I did not remember a cloak room in Room C, my 7-8 grade room, but the fourth photo below, from the 1968 yearbook, when that room was used for Typing class, clearly shows the cloak room there. Vernon Janzen's memoir mentions putting his lunch pail on a shelf in the "cloak room" in Miss Rathmel's first grade room in 1937, which was in Room C at that time, consistent with the right photo below from much later. Although we have no photos of the original south end of Room F, it seems safe to assume that there were "mirror image" cloak rooms at the outside ends of Rooms A, C, D, and F. We have no photos or memories of any coat storage for the middle two rooms, Rooms B and E.

Perhaps students for those rooms, which were for high school classes, shared the cloak rooms in Rooms A and D, which were also for high school students.

Alternatively, there may have been coat hooks on the back (south) wall of the stage for that purpose.



There were two entrances from the front/west; these were behind/inside a sheltered "porch", a covered entrance, indicated by the gray boxes in my rooms layout diagram; these are nicely shown in the photos below. There were two doors to the outside at the north end, from rooms A and D; and, also two doors to the outside at the south end, from rooms C and F. The outside doors for rooms A and D remained until the building was torn down, or certainly until the late 1960s, when I graduated. The left photo below, from the ??? yearbook, nicely shows both the covered entry areas at the front of the building. The right photo below, from the ??? yearbook, provides a rare look at the entire south end of the original building, with a small window in each room that presumably let some light into the cloak rooms; and the doors into the classrooms at the south end. Other photos of the entry way and double doors to classrooms are shown below. Note the nice concrete walkway visible in the third photo.



Vernon Janzen thought he remembered doors from Rooms C and F into the hallway to the north, allowing access to the other parts of the building for both students and teachers. The likely location of these is indicated in my room layout diagram at the start of this document.

2.3. Room uses.

The earliest graduates I could interview in 2022-2024 -- Gerry Toews Reimer, John Regier, John Richey, Viola Regier Truitt, perhaps others -- clearly remembered the first 6 grades being at the south end, in rooms C and F, with 3 grades per room; the 1946 and 1947 yearbooks confirm this, describing grades 1-3 as primary and grades 4-6 as intermediate.

Mick Zaloudek and Vernon Janzen specifically remembered grades 1-3 in room C and grades 4-6 in room F. John Regier clearly remembered that grades 7-8 were in Room E2; this would have kept the first 8 grades together at the south end of the school. However, John Regier said that grades 7-8 were considered part of the high school at that time, making Rooms C and F the grade school and all of the other rooms as high school. The photo to the right from 1939, copied from Vernon Janzen's memoir, is a nice photo of Grades 1-3, presumably at their south end of the school. It is also nice photo confirmation that Grades 1-3 were together at that time.



This would leave rooms A, B, D, and E1 for the high school classes. Consistent with this, John Regier remembered taking two years of high school Spanish in room D. He also remembered taking math in room B his senior year, 1950-51. He remembered taking Typing in room E1, as did John Richey. John Richey remembered special tables being in Room D, where he took both Chemistry and Mechanical Drawing. Joan Zaloudek Markwell remembers maybe taking History and English in Room A. Joan also remembered Math in Room B, and music as well; music there would make sense, so the piano could be near the stage for programs. The photos of the stage at the south end of Room B showing the piano there confirm this as the likely location for Music. Viola Regier Truitt remembered doing rhythm band performances on the stage, Room S. The 1946 yearbook Music write-up (by teacher Helena Janzen Toews) says that Music was every day at 11:15 – some days girls, some days boys, some days both; no indication what the boys did on girls' music day and vice versa. Then 1947 yearbook says boys had Music at 11:15 and girls at 1:45.

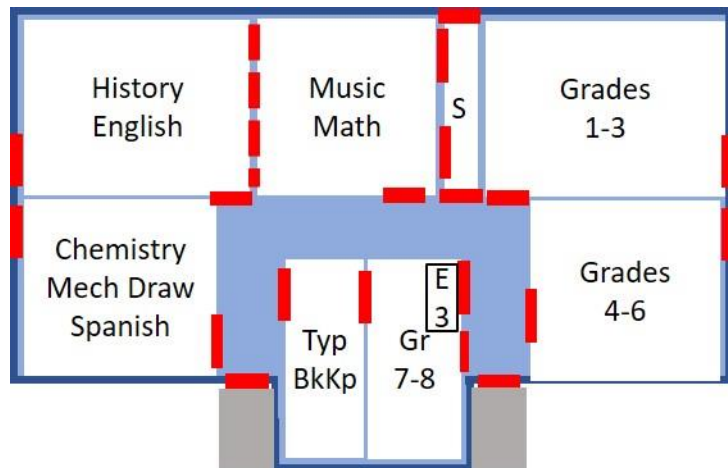
Gerry Reimer said that the high school library was on the north wall of Room B, but that was the removable divider wall. John Regier remembered it as a space about 6-feet wide that had shelves in it, at the north end of Room A. This makes more sense, and would be consistent with English being taught in that room. Whether this was the cloak room space, or perhaps on the wall in front of the cloak room, is not clear. Actually, when I asked John Regier about the library, his response was "What library?!" He told me where it was, but then said "I never got there in 4 years!"

There are no memories or photos of a lunch room for the earliest days of the school, so presumably students brought their lunches to school with them, and they most likely ate at their desks in the winter and perhaps on the playground in warmer weather. A lunch room was moved in behind the school in later years; we do not know when, except that it was there at least by 1946 or so. The only photos of that building are presented in Chapter 3, along with the several other buildings that eventually surrounded the six-room brick school before and while the new high school and gym were being built.

Carl Hays told an interesting story of riding the bus – he said that in his high school days the bus loaded with kids would stop by Rathmel Grocery before going to school, and that it was his job to go into Rathmel's and carry all of the groceries that would be needed for that day's cafeteria meals onto the bus, for delivery to the school.

Both Carl and Vernon Janzen had clear memories of the school bus being orange, not yellow. And both clearly remembered one of the buses having been bought from the City of Enid during the WWII years, a bus that had the "Colored" seating marked at the back of the bus, though Carl thought that had eventually been painted over. Times have changed.

The diagram to the right shows what is known about what grades and classes were taught in which rooms as of about 1945, before room usage began to change as one-room schools closed and more grade school students began attending school in Kremlin.



2.4. Layout of the schoolgrounds.

2.4.a. An important aerial photo.

The image to the right is the earliest aerial view of the school that I have found, from aerial photos of the entire town and surrounding farms from 1937 that I purchased from the National Archives in Washington, DC. The school building is there, the dark structure, with the sidewalks to the two west entry doors and to the north and south entrances clearly visible. The sidewalk appears to extend a good way north of the school also, though Peggy thought that there had been no sidewalks, and the street was not paved, and students having to walk in the mud to get to the school. The two whitish areas east of the school could be ball-field play areas; but they also look like they could include buildings—they look very much like the bus barn area north of the school, where the building is really just barely visible. The house across the street to the west was the home of Fred Phillips, an early custodian and bus driver; it served as a part of the school for a brief time, as described in the next chapter!



2.4.b. Outhouses.

Multiple people remember two out-houses behind the school to the east, one for boys to the north, one for girls to the south. They were quite a ways east of the school, as shown in the photo; various people thought this was at least 30-50 yards or more east of the school – not all of the way east to the farmland there, but “a long

way back”, presumably to avoid the bathroom odor at the school building. Mainly, early students remembered how far it was to get to the toilets, and how cold it was to use them in the winter. I had assumed that the walkways to the outhouses that show in the aerial photo were well-worn paths, but John Regier said that there were nice concrete sidewalks going back to both outhouses.

Connie Fisher Bittle clearly remembered that the girls’ toilets had stalls with walls. Mick Zaloudek thought the boys’ outhouse was a 2-holer, perhaps with a “trough” also; he said, of course, he did not know about inside the girls’ outhouse! Errol Wofford had very clear memories of the boys’ outhouse. He said it faced west; that there was a kind of picket fence around it. Students entered from the north, made a left turn to the east, then another left turn to the north, to get into the outhouse. He thought maybe there had been 3 holes, and said for certain that there were NO stalls or walls between. He remembered that little kids like him only went to use the outhouse only in an emergency, because there were always big kids there who would threaten to throw them down one of the toilet holes! He said there was a urinal trough, I gather running east-west, that was partly outside against the picket fence, and partly inside the building (likely for winter use). Great and interesting details!

I have no good information on how boys from the south end of the school got to the boys’ outhouse walkway at the north end, or girls from the north end to their outhouse walkway at the south end. There does appear to be a sidewalk behind the school for this, but it appears to be interrupted in the middle, likely for the coal truck to dump coal into the cellar. It is also possible that students could have used the doors at both ends of the stage as a route to the back side of the building, but it seems this would have interrupted the classes going on in the classroom on the other side of the stage curtain. I do not know of any other exits to the east side of the school besides the stage door.

2.4.c. Playground.

Some remembered there being a ball field of sports to the east and near the outhouses, presumably for the older students. This is likely to be the light area between the two outhouse walkways in the photo above. There were several who remembered the grade school playground being at the south end of the building, where the grade school rooms were at that time. In Vernon Janzen’s memoir, he says the playground had “swings, merry-go-rounds, slides, and monkey bars”, pretty much the same playground equipment that was at the school in our days in the 50s and 60s. This could be one or both of the light areas to the south of the school in the aerial photo above. In fact, the slide from that playground is still at the south end of the building as the new high school and gymnasium were being added in 1951, in the photo here. Also note the unpaved dirt street south of the school, still in 1951.



2.4.d. Sports and athletics.

Basketball was likely the only organized sport in the early days of the school. Both basketball practices and games were held at the Community Hall, 3-4 blocks north and one block west of the school. Photos of Community Hall use for school events are included in Chapter 3. It seems likely that practice would have been at the end of the day, and that the bus may have picked up students there, so that they did not need to walk back to the school; but I have no good information on this. The Community Hall was also used for other school events for

which the auditorium and stage in Rooms A, B, and S were not adequate. John Richey or John Regier, I think, told me that the dressing room at the Community Hall was in the basement there, with a dirt floor. One year the boys got permission and poured themselves a concrete floor and were quite proud of that. From my days, I well remember what I assume was a dressing room at the southwest corner, just inside the west door. In my day, there was a concession stand at the southeast corner; it is possible that this may at one time have been a similar dressing room, but I have no evidence nor anyone's memories to support this idea. It seems more likely that it was always a concession stand. I am somewhat surprised that there seem to be no photos of sports events at the Community Hall in any of the yearbooks from these years.

2.4.e. Stable and/or bus barn.

The first Kremlin school building, before this one was built in 1933, would have needed some sort of stable for horses during the day. By 1933, I presume that nearly all students walked, drove, or rode a school bus to get to school. I do not know when bus service started to be available for those not in "town". The newspaper article from 1939 at the start of this document clearly indicates three buses and bus routes. John Regier stated firmly that the white structure just north of the school in the aerial photo above is the original bus barn. There are no ground-level photos that include that bus barn until early 1950s yearbooks, so I had assumed that it was added about that time. But John Regier said that the bus barn "was there from the start". Bus barn photos are included in Chapter 3, covering the time frame when those photos were taken. John Regier thought that ALL of North Enid high school students came to Kremlin in his days; that Kremlin was perhaps their only choice for high school. He remembers one bus specifically for North Enid kids, one for the Valley Center kids (John Regier, Barkmans, others), and another for the kids who lived north of Kremlin (including John Richey).

2.5. Years of school grounds changes.

This ends the story of the years of ONLY the first red brick school. Chapter 3 covers the interesting and complicated years from 1946 to 1951, to accommodate more grade school students as their one-room schools closed. Then in 1951 a new high school and gymnasium/auditorium addition was built onto the red brick school, making room for all students in a single school building again. That addition is the subject of Chapter 4. Later chapters deal with yet more additions and changes.

[Return to chapter list](#)

Chapter 3. One-room schools as student population grew**Acknowledgements and thanks to those who contributed to this chapter:**

Dorothy Voth Gray, my cousin, Class of 1954, (deceased), and her son and his cousins, who gave me access to her photo albums and early yearbooks after she died; these provided invaluable documentation. Her own photos from her albums and her early yearbook photos provide the ONLY photo and firm documentation to confirm and supplement the memories of many others below.

Thanks to the author, unknown, of an earlier Kremlin School history that I obtained from Gini Zaloudek's collection of memorabilia for the 2001 Kremlin Town Centennial. Information there comes from a variety of first-hand memories that are documented there.

Gerry Toews Reimer, my cousin, Class of 1950, by phone, email, text, and in person

Joan Zaloudek Markwell, Class of 1950, in person and through Peggy Smith Guthrie Harris

Vernon Janzen, first grade 1937, by phone from Reedley, California, and through his published memoir

John Regier, Class of 1951, by phone and by email, from Reedley, California

John Richey, Class of 1951, (deceased during this project), by phone, mail, and in person in Wichita, Kansas

Bertha Toews Thomas, Class of 1952, by phone, email, and in person, Kansas City, Kansas

Ed Barkman, Eighth Grade 1952, then left, by email

Viola Regier Truitt, Class of 1959, by phone, text, and in person

Betty Jo Kirkpatrick, Class of 1960, by phone

Peggy Smith Guthrie Harris, Class of 1962, who not only provided her own memories but passed on memories from her cousins and others, or helped me to connect with them myself

Mickey Zaloudek, Class of 1956

Errol Wofford, Class of 1961

Roy Sanders, Class of 1962, (deceased during this project), who provided the first first-hand memory of the "south-end building"

Jakie Lee Rempel, in Class of 1962, but left after freshman year, by phone and email

Galen Toews, my brother, (deceased), Class of 1963, who provided his hand-written memories of his first-grade years in the Columbia school house

James Buller, Class of 1963, by phone and email and text

Connie Fisher Bittle, Class of 1956, by phone

Mary Ann Zaloudek, Class of 1951, by phone

Earl Dyck, Class of 1969, by email and text, whose identification of his mother in the Lunch Room photo helped immensely in figuring out some useful things from that photo

Dick Chelf, Class of 1961, for sharing his mother Tillie's scrapbook which had one very important photo and story

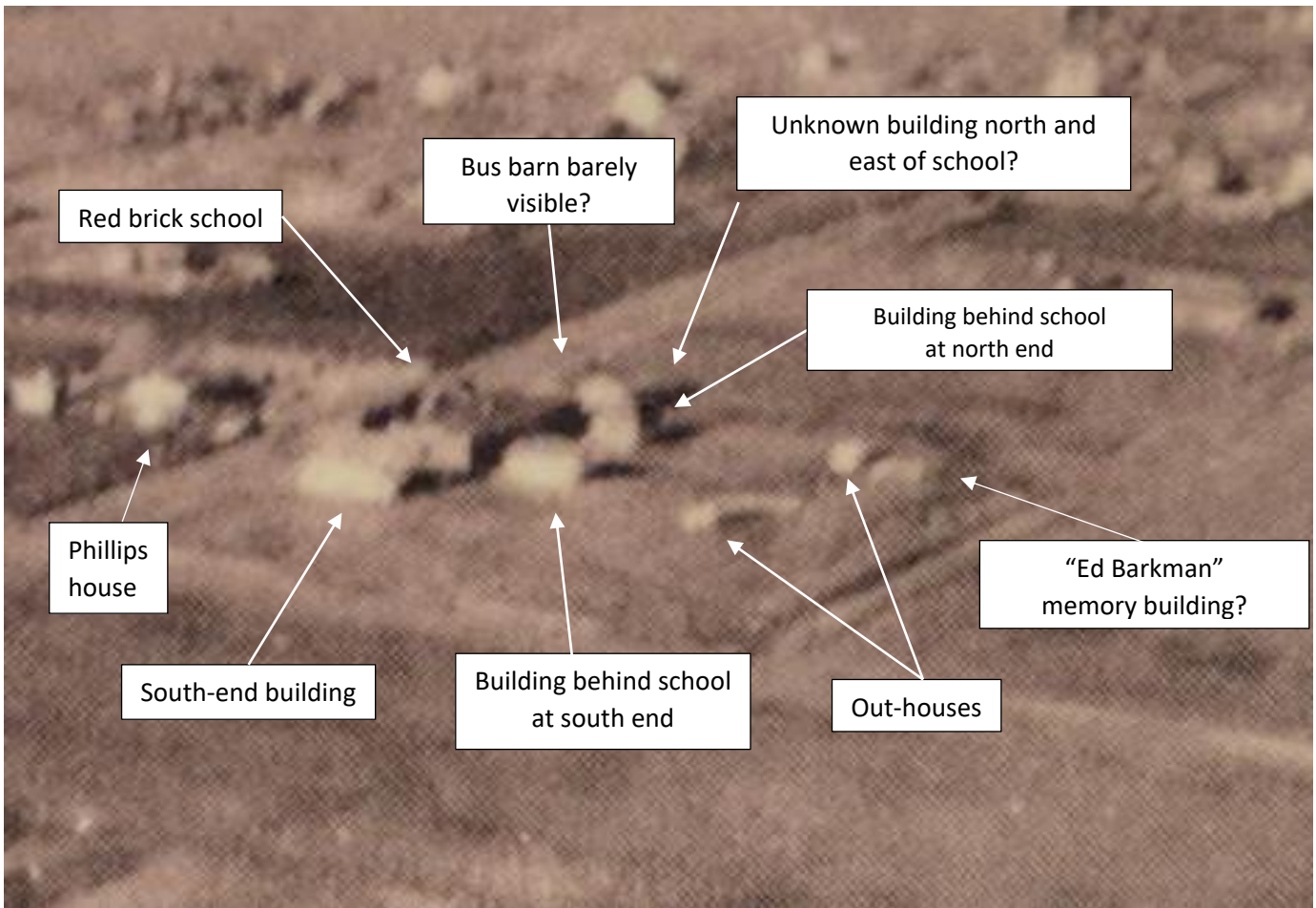
My brother Arrel Toews, Class of 1966, for help with editing and style content suggestions

3.1. Additional buildings around the red brick school, to about 1949

The student population grew in the 1940s, to a significant extent because the district's one-room grade schools began to close, one-by-one. Students from those one-room schools had been coming to Kremlin for high school, but as the one-room schools closed, the grade school students came to Kremlin also. It is likely that most of those schools had closed by the late 1940s, leading to the need for more space for the grade school students. There was likely little or no increase in the number of high school students at Kremlin as the surrounding one-room schools closed. Though it was more space for grade school students that was needed, this was accomplished by building a new high school for the older students who had been using a large part of the red brick building, so that the entire original red brick school could then be used for the increasing number of grade school students coming to Kremlin. A gymnasium/auditorium on the school grounds was also needed, so that students would not have to continue to trek over to the Community Hall for their sports events, play practices, programs, and graduations. The new high school and gymnasium addition was built in 1950 and 1951; the exact months for starting and finishing that building are not clear. The changes that occurred before and during those construction years is the topic of this Chapter, what I call "the one-room schoolhouse years", for reasons you will see. Information about the new high school and gymnasium addition and the corresponding classroom changes is the topic of Chapter 3.

The photo on the next page from the 1949 yearbook is one the most important photos of the school and buildings around it from the exciting time of changes at the school covered in this chapter, 1946-1951. The top photo is a clean version, for any who may find other things of interest. The bottom photo has my notations of each of the buildings in the photo, which should help in understanding which building is referred to in the text that follows. Each building will be explained as best as possible, though a good bit remains unclear (as is the photo!). You can try zooming in, or zooming out, for perhaps better views; but this is about as good as it gets.





The first well-documented additional building on the Kremlin school grounds is either a house or a one-room school house that was used as the lunch room for at least some years. Connie Fisher Bittle was certain the building was a house, with dining in one room and kitchen in another. Gerry Toews Reimer was equally certain that it was a one-room schoolhouse. A newly obtained document with summarized memories from several early students clearly stated that it was a house, and that looks most reasonable from the photo below. This building was located behind the red brick building (east) and at the north end. John Regier said that this lunchroom was the only additional building by the school when he graduated in 1944.

The photo here is of students inside that building and labeled as "Lunch Room" in the 1946 yearbook, only the second year that a yearbook was printed, so our earliest source. There is a pot-bellied stove for heat, and the students are sitting on benches. There are no tables visible. This would be consistent with what Peggy and Joan and perhaps others remember about the earliest lunch room, and what was "documented" in the written early school history – that students sat on benches with their food on boards that folded down from the wall to be used as tables. Back then, meals cost 25 cents.



The girl with blond hair and glasses to the left in the Lunch Room photo was confirmed by Earl Dyck to be his mother, Sarah Esther Toews, who likely lived somewhere in or near North Enid at the time. He said that her ability to bend her elbow backwards, as in the photo, was “her signature move” and a clear give-away that it was her, in addition to her face and glasses matching his memory and her photo in that yearbook. She was from the Class of 1948, so this would make the older girls to the left in the photo the sophomores from that year. At least some meals were prepared in that building, with the cook standing in the middle of that photo; other students brought their own lunches from home. I cannot be certain, but the first girl by the stove may be Bertha Toews, with Marilyn Janzen as the girl with blond curly hair and then the twins Doris and Dorothy Voth behind her; all of these students were sixth graders in 1946. Something very puzzling to me in this photo is that there are only girls shown in the lunch room! Did boys and girls have separate lunch hours? Or did girls eat at this end (by the stove) and boys ate at the other (colder) end of the lunch room? A bit of a puzzle.

The next buildings moved onto the school grounds in Kremlin were both multiple and complicated, with no completely definitive source, but many highly reliable sources. The 2001 School History document says that a one-room school house was moved in to the south of the kitchen and lunchroom building “about 1948”, and that two additional one-room school buildings were moved in at the south end of the red brick school at the same time. We only know the identity of one of those, the Rose Bud school, originally located several miles south and east of Kremlin. Class stories in the 1948 yearbook describe the complicated changes that took place that year (fall of 1947). Grades 1-3 in Room C and grades 4-6 in room F were both too crowded that fall because of one-room school closures. So, at the end of the first six-weeks, teacher Anna Ruth Thesman took the 5th and 6th graders to have class in the Fred Phillips house across the street to the west from the school. The 3rd graders moved from Room C to room F with the 4th graders – now for the first time there were only 2 grades per room, 1-2 remaining in Room C, 3-4 in Room F, and 5-6 in the Phillips house temporarily. After 11 weeks in the Phillips house, the yearbook story says that the 5th and 6th graders moved into the former Rose Bud one-room schoolhouse “which was moved here and newly decorated for us.” We presume that school house was moved to the south end of the red brick school, close to the 1-2 and 3-4 grade rooms; a building can be seen there in the photo above, and a school being there was remembered by Roy Sanders in his childhood days, and by several of the oldest graduates. The playground area appears to be further south, between the south-end school building and the road to the south. Mick Zaloudek clearly remembered being in the south end white wood school, at least for 5th grade (1948-49), maybe 6th (1949-50). I think that Mick is the only person I talked to who remember being in that building for classes, though several others remember the building being there.

The 7th and 8th grade story from that same 1948 yearbook says that grades 7-8 also moved “out of the school house to the new building to the south”, but sooner, after the second six weeks, 5 weeks earlier than for grades 5-6 in their story. This fits with the 2001 School History document saying that two one-room schools were moved in to the south of the red brick building. I think we cannot be certain whether Rose Bud was the building directly south of the school or perhaps the building further east at the south end. Regardless, at least for this year, it seems fairly certain that grades 5-6 and 7-8 each had their own one-room school classroom building at the south end of the red brick school. The different moving dates in the yearbook stories for 5-6 and 7-8 each moving into their one-room schools is consistent with this. The identity of the of the two one-room school houses besides Rose Bud that were moved onto the school grounds is not certain; [I still have some hope of obtaining documentation of which buildings were where and what they were used for in different years](#). The Wild Horse, Pleasant Valley, and Red Rock one-room schools were the other schools that fed into the Kremlin school system, so these are all possibilities if not likelihoods.

Uses of those buildings may well have changed from year to year to year also. Errol Wofford, Class of 1961, remembered being in the wooden building at the south end and east of the school for Grades 1 and 2, and

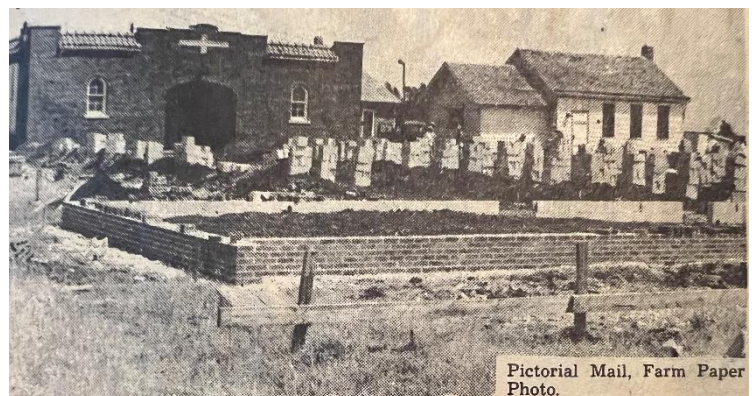
he remembered a similar building to the west of that building, i.e. the building at the south end and south of the school; one of those two buildings was Rose Bud, but again, we still do not know which building was where.

The two buildings behind the school, to the east, but quite close to the school, are barely distinguishable in the aerial photo of the school shown on pages 2 and 3. These are also nicely shown in the photo of Dorothy Voth and some classmates in the space between these buildings and the brick school, looking to the north. This is not a yearbook photo, but is likely from 1953 or 1954, Dorothy graduating in 1954. At this time, it seems there would have been a need to leave enough space between the two east buildings for the coal truck to continue to deliver coal to the middle part of the east side of the red brick school, and the photo appears to show such a space. [An unanswered question is how students accessed these two buildings. This could have been "the long way around", from the doors at the north and south ends of the red brick building. Or perhaps students would have used the doors at the east and west ends of the stage as a convenient way to get from the inside of the red brick building to these temporary buildings to the east; but it seems this would have been disruptive for classes in Room B, with only a curtain separating those classes from the stage and potential doors to the back of the building.](#) The bus barn immediately north of the school is also visible, with a bus between the school and the bus barn. This is NOT the bus barn that many of us remember from later, a full block or more north of the school.



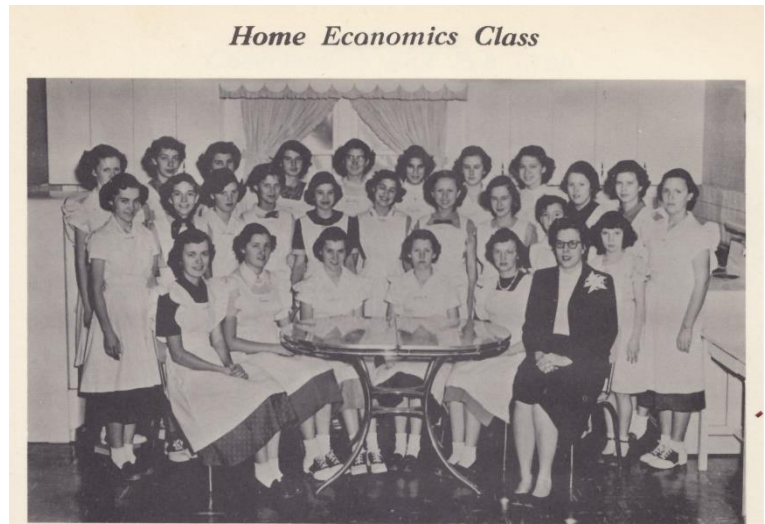
[The bus barn immediately north of the school is also visible, with a bus between the school and the bus barn. This is NOT the bus barn that many of us remember from later, a full block or more north of the school.](#)

A very important photo of the two buildings to the east of the red brick school is shown here, from a newspaper story from Tillie Chelf's scrapbook; it is my most recent photo discovery. This photo was taken after the school at the south end was moved (fate unknown, as above), and when construction on the foundation for the new high school and gymnasium was just beginning (see the brick foundation and stacks of cement blocks at front of photo). The building east of the school at the south end is clearly visible, and it seems to clearly be a one-room schoolhouse; there is nothing to nail down its identity, except to show that it is NOT the Pleasant Valley one-room schoolhouse, which had a much shorter entry/porch. The building east of the school at the north end, by all accounts a house used as the lunchroom, also shows, but only its southeast corner.

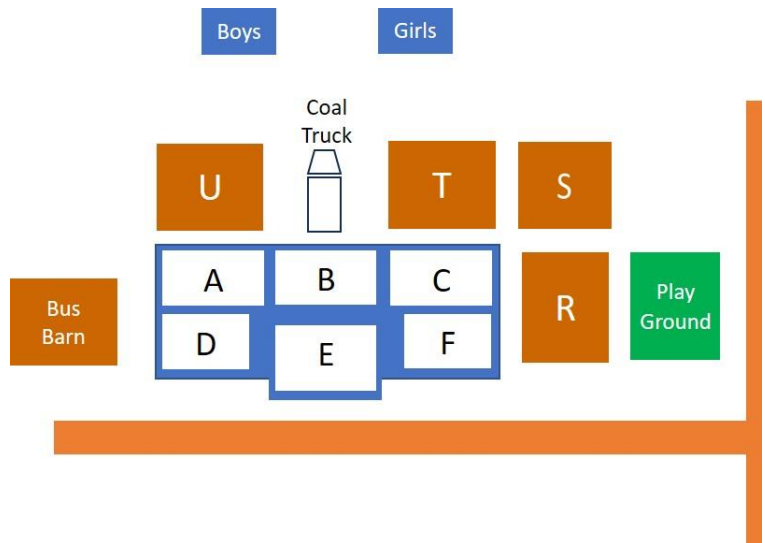


The building east of the school at the north end, by all accounts a house used as the lunchroom, also shows, but only its southeast corner.

John Richey remembered Home Economics being taught in the building at the south end of the east side of the red brick building that shows clearly in the sepia aerial photo. The photo to the right from the 1951 yearbook seems to clearly show the inside of that Home Ec building; it is not clear whether it was a house or a one-room school building, but it had a nice modern-looking kitchen area, likely added or renovated when it became the Home Ec room. John Richey remembered that a sewing machine in that building did not work, and the superintendent could not fix it; so, John Richey was called in, and he DID fix it. He was proud that he got it fixed, but he seemed even more proud that he was perhaps the only boy ever to be allowed into the Home Ec room! John Richey also clearly identified the Home Ec building as being east of the red brick school and at the south end.



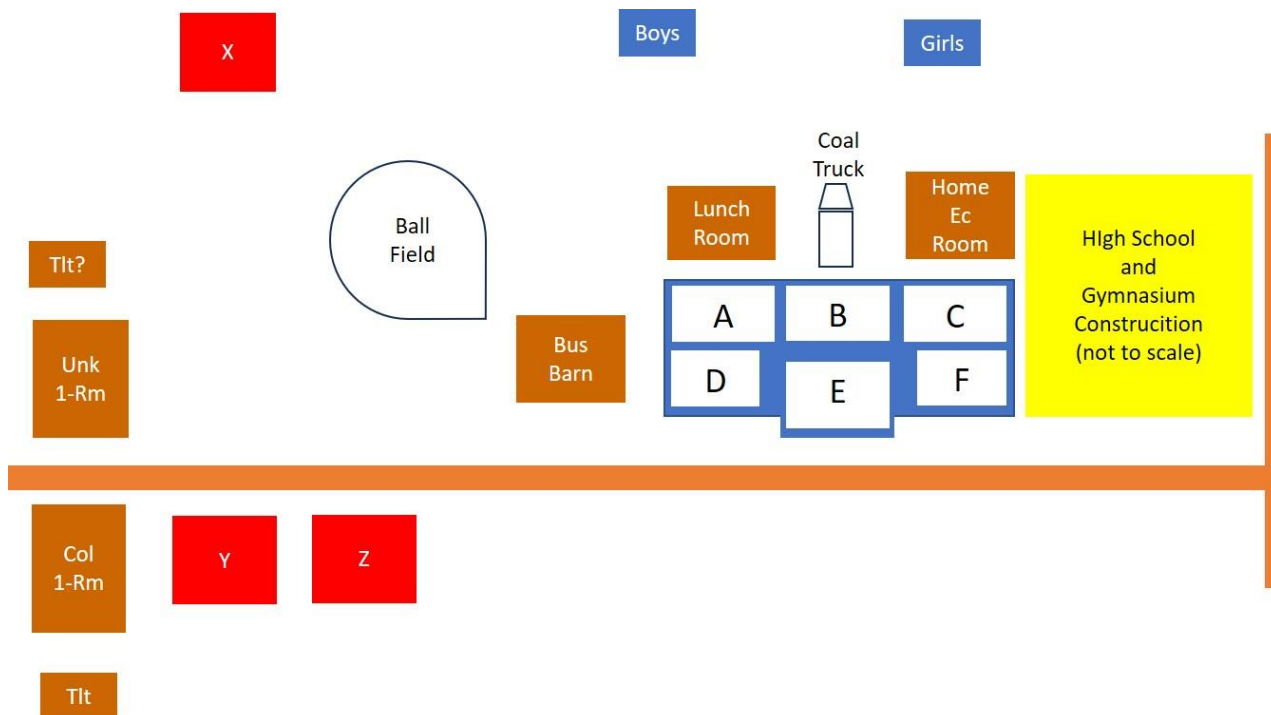
To the right is the layout diagram for what the school grounds likely looked like as of 1949-50, before additional changes were made for construction of the high school and gym addition. This layout diagram is also consistent with what seems to be shown in the sepia aerial photo from the same time period.



Either R or S would have been the Rose Bud school house, but we cannot be certain which. My assumption is that R was Rose Bud, housing 5th and 6th graders for some years, described as having been moved in “to the south”. Rose Bud is the only building for which a move-in date is known from yearbook stories, in the fall of 1948. S would be the other one-room school building for 7th and 8th graders. T was the Home Ec room, and U was the cafeteria and lunchroom.

3.2. MORE buildings near the red brick school, 1949-1951, for construction of the high school and gym addition.

Sometime during or at the end of the 1949-50 school year, things had to change, to make way for the new high school and gymnasium addition at the south end of the original 6-room red brick building. The schoolhouse at the south end had to be moved (or demolished), because that is where the new high school building would be. A diagram of the buildings “around” the red brick school is shown below, indicating where buildings were known or thought to be in 1950-51, as described in more detail below.

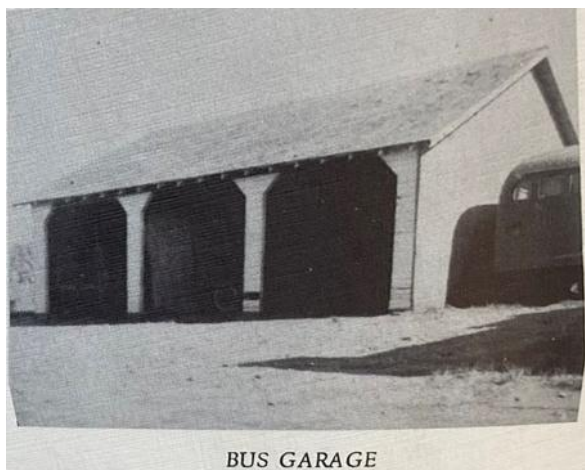


To maintain class space for all of the students, two one-room schoolhouses were moved a long block north of the red brick building. Peggy, Roy, my brother Galen, James Buller, and others all clearly remember two one-room school houses across the street from each other in their earliest years. We know that the school on the west side was the Columbia one-room school house, moved into town from the Jake Thesman farm 1.5 miles south of the Midway. John Richey thought that the Pleasant Valley one-room school house from about 1 mile east and 2 miles north of Kremlin was the other building moved into town, but details of the east school do not seem to be completely consistent with what we know about Pleasant Valley. We do know that Pleasant Valley ended up at the east end of the Community Hall, with nice photos of it there; and Gerry Toews Reimer thought that the school by the Community Hall (Pleasant Valley) had been moved in straight from the country, and she had no memory of it ever having been north of the school. *(I continue to hope that there may be some official documents somewhere to establish which buildings came from where and when they were moved in!)*

Grades 1-2 were on the west side of the street in the Columbia school house, and best memories are that grades 3-4 were on the east side. Peggy remembered her second-grade year (1950-51) being at Columbia, and Galen and James clearly remembered their first-grade year there. Peggy remembered students throwing dirt clods at each other across the street. The street was not paved, and these grade school students had to walk down that street, often muddy, to get to the lunchroom. Peggy remembered one younger girl, she thought Donna Richey, having her shoe get stuck in the mud and not being able to retrieve it! People remember an outhouse behind Columbia School. In particular, Jakie Lee Rempel remembered getting his finger smashed in the west door of the Columbia school on the way to the out-house, and that his teacher, Miss Rathmel, had no sympathy at all, saying that she had clearly told them to always use the east door to go to the bathroom, even though the bathroom was to the west!

Mick Zaloudek was in 7th or 8th grade during the construction years. He was fairly certain that he was NOT in either of the two one-room schools to the north those years, but somewhere in the 6-room red brick school. [I hope to talk to more students from these years in person to try to get more definitive information.](#)

Below are two nice photos of the first bus barn, or “bus garage”, just a few yards north of the school building.

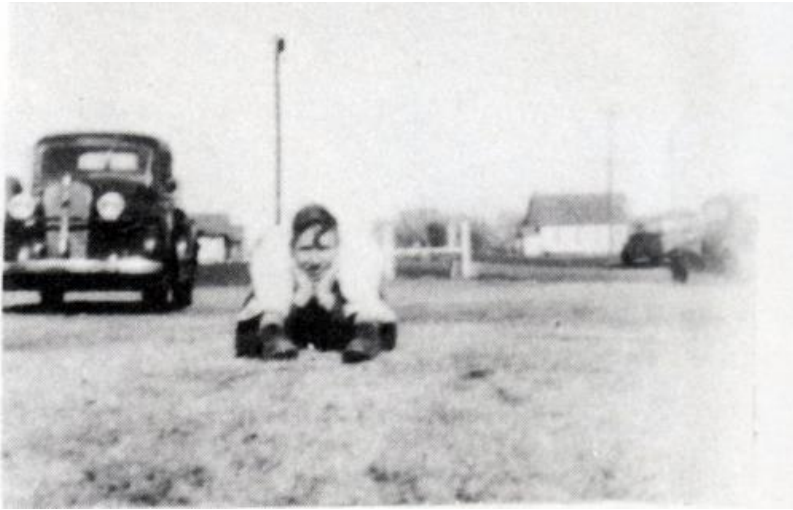


The photo to the right, from the 1955 yearbook, is a nice close-up view of the Columbia one-room schoolhouse at its location on the west side of the street and about a block north of the school.



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The photo below of the "Pretzel" from the 1952 yearbook is the only photo I have found that clearly shows BOTH of the one-room school houses to the north of the red brick building. Both buildings have sheltered entryways protruding toward the street; they look like mirror images! In the background of the photo of the woman at the flagpole to the right, the west end of the schoolhouse on the east side of the road can be seen, with its sheltered entryway just barely visible. The northwest corner of the roof of the bus barn can also be seen in this photo, just to the right of the flagpole.



The buildings described above are the buildings that seem fairly well documented, including in photos, yearbook stories, and memories of multiple students. But there may well have been more. Dick Chelf fairly strongly thought there were three buildings on the west side of the street north of the school during the construction years, for grades 1-6; but it was not clear that he remembered the building on the east side of the street that is clearly shown in the photos above.

Ed Barkman seemed certain there was a building far to the northeast from the school, "past center-field of the ball field north of the school"; he seemed to have clear memories of walking across the ball field to get to that building, but he did not remember what grades or classes he might have had there. It is possible that the building in the photo at the top of the next page, again from the 1952 yearbook, could be that building; but it seems too small, and no windows are visible, so it seems more likely that this is the boys' outhouse to the east of the red brick building. In fact, it looks like the walkway to the girls' outhouse may be visible running from left to right across this photo. The aerial photos of the school grounds seem to show a large open play area east of the red brick school and west of the



outhouses. The material in the foreground could be piles of debris from the new school construction. I DO think that the "extra" building near the men's outhouse in the aerial photo of the school at the beginning of this chapter may be the building remembered by Ed Barkman. The lighter area to the left (west) of this building would be the "ball field" that Ed remembered; this would have then been the building for grades 5-6 when grades 1-2 were in Columbia on the west side of the street and grades 3-4 in the building on the east side of the street.

Returning to the school buildings layout diagram on page 7, several questions remain. Grades 1-2 and 3-4 were in the two buildings a block north, Columbia on the west side of the street (Col) with grades 1-2, and an unknown (Unk) one-room school on the east side of the street, with grades 3-4; Tlt indicates the known or likely toilet locations. It seems likely that the east building might have been Rose Bud, because it had to be removed from the south end of the school anyway to make way for construction of the high school and gymnasium addition.

We are not certain where grades 5-6 and 7-8 were at this time. Ed Barkman's memory suggests 5-6 at the northeast corner of the school property; 7-8 were always somewhat part of the high school and may have remained in the red brick building during construction. The photo earlier of the very beginning of construction shows the Home Ec room still in place, and it is possible that the gymnasium could have been built without removing that building. It seems that Rooms C and F would almost certainly have been completely closed during construction, but perhaps only for the final stage of connecting the old and new buildings. It is also possible that temporary partitions were built across Rooms C and F, to allow classes to continue in the north end of those rooms while construction was happening at the south end of those rooms.

The red building X in the diagram is the temporary 5th-6th grade room remembered by Ed Barkman as to the northeast and across center field of the ball field, and perhaps shown as marked in the 1949 aerial image shown again below. Red buildings Y and Z are included to fit with memories of Dick Chelf, but with no photos or other memories to confirm these.

The big remaining questions that remain to learn or for confirmation are where 5-6 grades and 7-8 grades were in those years, and more firm identification of the buildings that became the lunch room, the Home Ec room, and which of the two added buildings near the south end of the school was the Rose Bud school. [Hopefully a student with clear memories of those years remains to be discovered! Thanks to anyone and everyone for any further help!!](#)

[Return to chapter list](#)

Chapter 4. 1952 - The new high school and gymnasium addition

Acknowledgements and thanks to those who contributed to this chapter:

Dorothy Voth Gray, my cousin, Class of 1954, (deceased), and her son and his cousins, who gave me access to her photo albums and early yearbooks after she died; these provided invaluable documentation. Her own photos from her albums and her early yearbook photos provide the ONLY photo and firm documentation to confirm and supplement the memories of many others below.

Peggy Smith Guthrie Harris, Class of 1962, who not only provided her own memories but passed on memories from her cousins and others, or helped me to connect with them myself

Faith Mary Janzen Heinrichs, Class of 1962, for photos not in yearbooks and many fun memories

Kay Beaver Randolph Putney, Class of 1962, for additional memories

Betty Jo Kirkpatrick Tennant, Class of 1960, for memories from these years

Errol Wofford, Class of 1961, by phone and email and text

Dick Chelf, Class of 1961, for sharing his mother Tillie's scrapbook, which had one very important photo and story

My brother Arrel Toews, Class of 1966, for help with places where my own memory was fuzzy, and for ongoing help with editing and style issues

4.1. Overview of this major addition

As mentioned earlier, a high school and gymnasium-auditorium were added to the south end of the 6-room red brick school during the 1951-52 school year, and then EVERYTHING changed! I will start the story with what happened to the one-room school buildings and perhaps others that were used temporarily at the school, especially during construction of the high school and gym, for continuity with the previous chapter. Next will be the changes that occurred in the red brick school building and its 6 rooms at that time. Then, finally, the layout and uses of the rooms in the new addition.

4.2 Dispersal or disposal of the one-room schools from the town school grounds.

We do not know with any certainty which buildings surrounded the original school, with the exception that one of them was the former Rose Bud one-room school. Similarly, I have found no information on what happened to any of the buildings from closest to the original school -- the Lunchroom building, the Home Ec room, or the Rose Bud school building. [I perhaps still have some limited hope that I will find someone who might know or some document that might have recorded this!](#)

The Columbia School remained on the west side of the street north of the school until about 1965, the last yearbook with photos including Columbia. It was used as a community gathering place, for some family reunions, and for some 4-H Club activities in its final years. In the first years after the high school and gym were built, Columbia was used for Shop classes, as labeled in the photo to the right, from the 1955 yearbook.



The photo to the right, from the 1956 yearbook, provides a rare look inside the Columbia School building, in its 1950s life, but also giving unique information about the inside of the building as it was when it was a one-room school out in the country. The woodworking benches and the jointer and the table saw are clearly visible. I presume that the dark raised area to the left rear of this photo is the stage from Columbia's years as a one-room schoolhouse. My vague memory is of an entryway from outside, perhaps with hooks for coats, and of the right (south) door here being the entry to the main room. The door to the left may have been a closet, or perhaps both doors provided entry into the main room. The photo of the outside of the building above seems to show a window onto the porch for the south door but not the north door. [Clear memories from others are welcome!](#)



The photo to the right, from the 1957 yearbook, is clearly labeled as Shop II, indicating that there were two years of wood shop back then already. This would also have been the last year that Shop class was taught in Columbia, the new Shop room being ready for the 1957-58 school year. Betty Jo Kirkpatrick Tennant remembered walking up to Columbia for music in her early years, after the high school and gym were built; this might have been in years before it was filled with woodworking equipment; or perhaps it served both purposes at the same time. This would likely explain why a new shop and music room were the next addition to be added, to the east of the new gym, so that students would no longer have to trudge up to Columbia for these two classes.

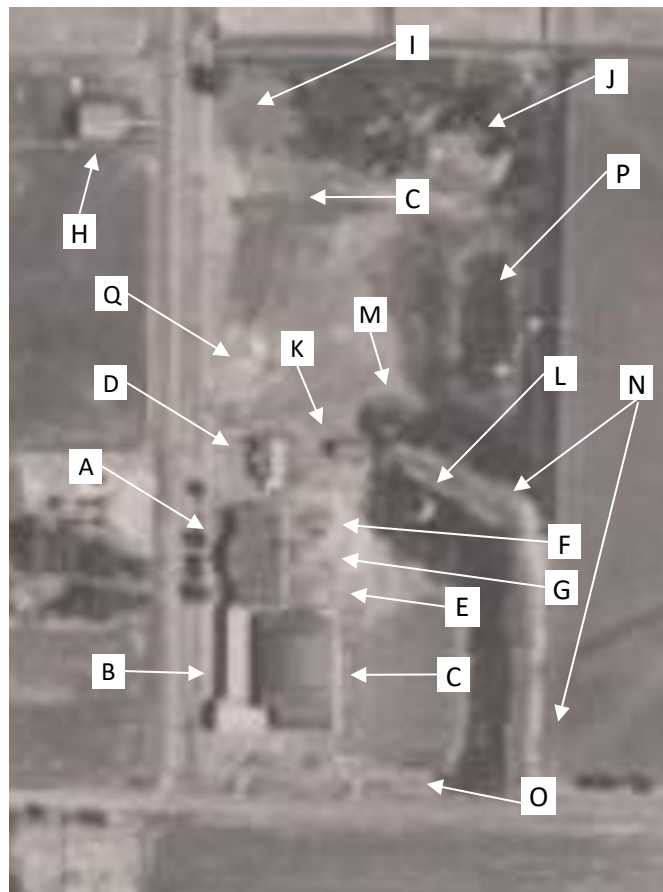


The photo to the right, shown also in the previous chapter, is an important one for this chapter also; it shows the very beginning of construction of the new addition. The shape of the upcoming addition is partly visible, with the brick foundation for the science and home ec rooms and the cement blocks in piles for the rest of the foundations. Importantly, it shows that both of the buildings behind the school (east) are still in place, but the one south of the red brick school (presumably Rose Bud) is now gone, to make way for the new addition.



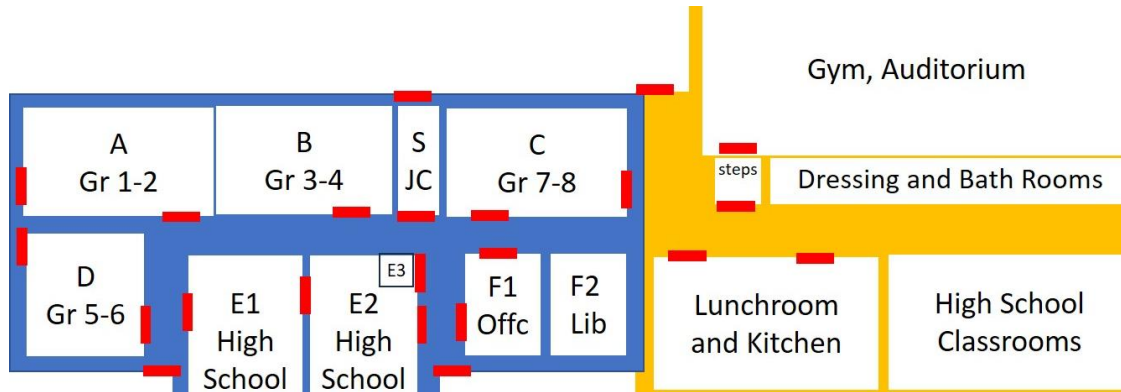
The photo to the left below is the “clean” version of an aerial photo of the school grounds from 1954 that I purchased from the National Archives aerial photos repository. The photo to the right below is a version with structures marked for help in locating things. The 6-room school (A) with the high school (B) and gym addition (C) now in place are clearly visible, along with the first bus barn (D) still standing just north of the original school. The two buildings east of the school seem to still be there (E, F), and possibly a third (G) east of the middle of the 6-room building. The Columbia School building (H) is clearly visible to the north, on the west side of the street. The school from the east side is gone, but its former location (I) appears to still be visible. The building in the upper right of this photo (J) is most likely the building where Ed Barkman remembered having 5th or 6th grade during construction.

There are some puzzles in the photo above and to the right also. There seems to be a building directly behind (east) of the bus barn (K) that was not present in earlier photos. It is also possible that this (K) is a bus or coal truck that was captured in this photo rather than a building. There are two additional possible “structures” just east of this building or vehicle; the one further south (L) is likely the boys’ outdoor bathroom still in place; the one further north (M) remains a mystery. It also looks like there might be a roadway leading to this area coming from the road to the south (N). There may be another building or buildings at the far southeast corner of the school property (O), perhaps earlier buildings moved there for some purpose. The nature of the dark area at the back of the school property to the northeast (P) is not known. The area just north of the bus barn and close to the street may be the ball field (Q); certainly it was in later years. It also appears that there may be sidewalk now on one or both sides of the street. [Help with any of these unknown items would be greatly appreciated!](#)



4.3. Changes in the original 6-room school building AFTER the high school and gym addition

The diagram below focuses on the changes to room usage in the original red brick school rooms after the high school and gym addition; the high school and gymnasium addition are truncated here. This is essentially the way we remember this part of the school in our grade school years, 1954-1963 or so.



With the high school in the new addition, the grade school took over much more of the original building; and now the youngest grades were at the north end rather than the south end. Grades 1-2 had the northeast corner room (A), and grades 5-6 had the northwest corner room (D). Grades 3-4 were in the middle room on the east side (B), and Grades 7-8 were in the southeast corner room (C).

Room A remained essentially unchanged, except for a new permanent south wall. There were several major changes to the middle room on the east side (B). First, the collapsible wall between Rooms A and B was replaced with a solid wall to separate the grades 1-2 room from the grades 3-4 room. Because Room B did not have a coat closet like Rooms A, B, D, and F did, at some point metal lockers were placed along the north wall of the 3-4 grade room to serve the same purpose. The two photos below provide a nicer view of the lockers at the



north end of Room B, from the 1961 yearbook, my 4th grade year. And yes, my well-remembered classmates from my early years are shown in these photos as well.



What had been the stage (S) at the south end of that room became the janitor's closet (JC). The curtains at the front of the stage were replaced with a solid wall, and I believe with a blackboard. Perhaps the part of the stage that protruded into the room was removed also. The doors were nailed shut, but I believe they remained in place; in my memory, there were for sure at least one and maybe two steps up toward those doors (or where they had been) that remained it the time I was in that room, 1960-1962; but few others seem to remember those doors or steps. To our knowledge, the steam radiators continued to be used for heat, though it is possible that the boiler was converted from coal to some other fuel source along the way.

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The divided room (E) at the middle of the west side of the school remained divided, and at least one side of it appears to have continued to be used for Typing; usage of E1 and E2 likely changed from year to year; I have not found many people who have clear memories, but the photo to the right, from the 1960 yearbook shows, this room as still divided at that time. Arrel remembers having Typing 1 his junior year, 1964-65, in the south side (E2) of that divided room; no one from those years has memories of E1. What oldest graduates remember as the office (E3) in the southeast corner of E2 became a storage closet; Arrel remembers it being used for storing pop for the pop machine in his day.



Finally, what had been Room F was now divided into two rooms. The north half became the office, with one door on the north side to the hallway where students entered the building, and another door onto the north-south hallway on the east side of the office. The south half of Room F now became the library. On the south side of the library was a "service window" where students could check out books. The room directly south of the library in the new addition was the lunchroom and was also used for study hall. Perhaps the library was only open for check-out during lunch periods, or perhaps during possible study hall hours also. That library window is shown below, the left photo from the 1954 yearbook and the middle photo and the right photo from 1957. There was clearly a door into the library from the lunchroom at the west end, as seen in the top right photo; there was also a door into this room from the north-south hallway, visible in the trophy case photo on page 20. The tall gas heater in the northwest corner of the lunchroom is also visible in the top right photo. This library in the south half of Room F is what became the Superintendent's office in the late 1960s, as many will remember that room.



Below are photos documenting the use of the lunchroom to the south of this library as the study hall also. The left photo, from the 1956 yearbook, is labeled Study Hall. The middle photo, from the 1954 yearbook, shows the library closed, with a teacher helping in Study Hall. The right photo, from the 1959 yearbook, shows a nice view of the inside of the library. Additional photos later in this chapter document the use of extra library shelves as trophy display also, and these provide additional views inside the room. These photos also show that the library and its window were popular places for taking yearbook photos also.



Note that Room F was likely made smaller than its original size for the high school addition. Presumably Rooms C and F were adjacent to each other in the original version of the 6-room school, but with the new addition, the long east hallway needed to be put in between those two rooms. There may have been other changes to both Rooms C and F to get the high school building connected. Presumably their original brick south walls were replaced, and at least one if not both of their south exit doors changed.

4.4 The high school and gymnasium addition

4.4.a. The new building

The photo and dedication to the right are from the 1952 yearbook. The first provides a nice view of the school board members who helped to make this new high school and gymnasium happen – Leonard Chelf, Fred Randolph, and my Uncle Henry G. Toews. A close-in zoom allows one to almost, or just barely, see the layout of the new addition on the blueprints that they are admiring in the photo. The yearbook excerpt below is the tribute and dedication to those people for making the addition happen, and it nicely documents the “confusion” that went on during construction, the story told in Chapter 3.



TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF KREMLIN PUBLIC SCHOOLS WE DEDICATE THIS EDITION OF THE BRONC. WE TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS OUR APPRECIATION FOR THE BOARD OF EDUCATION'S UNTIRING EFFORTS AND FAITHFUL GUIDANCE OF KREMLIN SCHOOL. WE THANK THESE MEN; MR. FRED RANDOLPH, MR. H. G. TOEWS, MR. L. A. CHELF; AND ALL THOSE WHO HAVE MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR OUR IMPROVED AND ENLARGED SCHOOL BUILDING AND ITS FACILITIES.

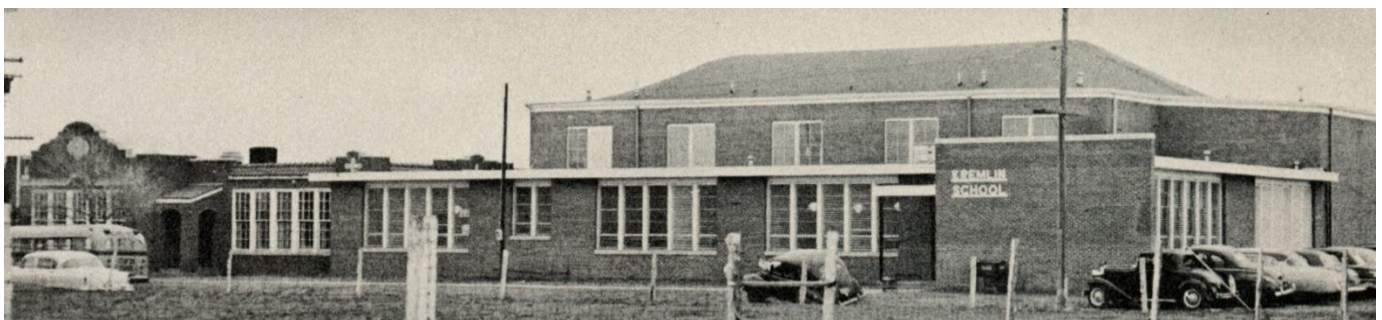
WE ARE ALSO APPRECIATIVE OF THE PATIENCE OF BOTH THE FACULTY AND STUDENT BODY DURING THE CONSTRUCTION. ALTHOUGH AT TIMES THE CONFUSION SEEMED INTOLERABLE; WE ARE SURE THE PLEASANT SURROUNDINGS OF OUR NEW HOME WILL OVER-SHADOW ALL THESE INCONVENIENCES AND OVERCOME ANY RETARDATIONS OF LEARNING.

THE BRONC STAFF

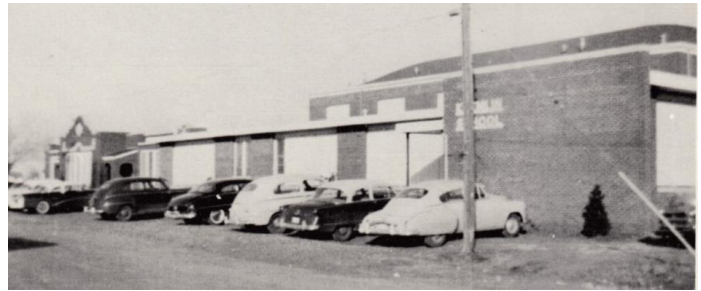
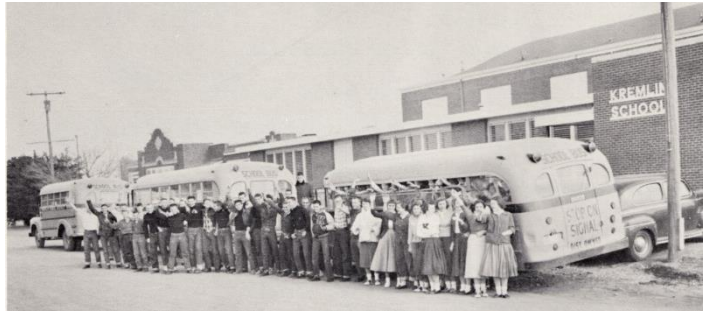
The left photo below, from the OK Historical Society, shows the continuing progress on construction, with good detail of the south end of the new addition. The slide from the playground that was originally at the south end of the original red brick school (and presumably south of the Rose Bud school also, when it was there) is still visible. The photo to the right, from 1952, is the first yearbook photo of the new addition completed.



The photo below is another nice photo of the completed new addition, with a somewhat larger perspective, from the Case magazine article on Kremlin and FW Zaloudek's Case dealership, also from Tillie Chelf's



collection and courtesy of Dick Chelf. Note the school bus in front of the red brick building, where buses parked to load up students; the variety of vintages of cars in the parking area at the south of the building, and one car, perhaps that of the photographer, that seems to be driven up on the sidewalk or stuck in the ditch in front of the school! [More additional and priceless photos like this one, that are NOT from the school yearbooks, are welcome from any and all!](#)

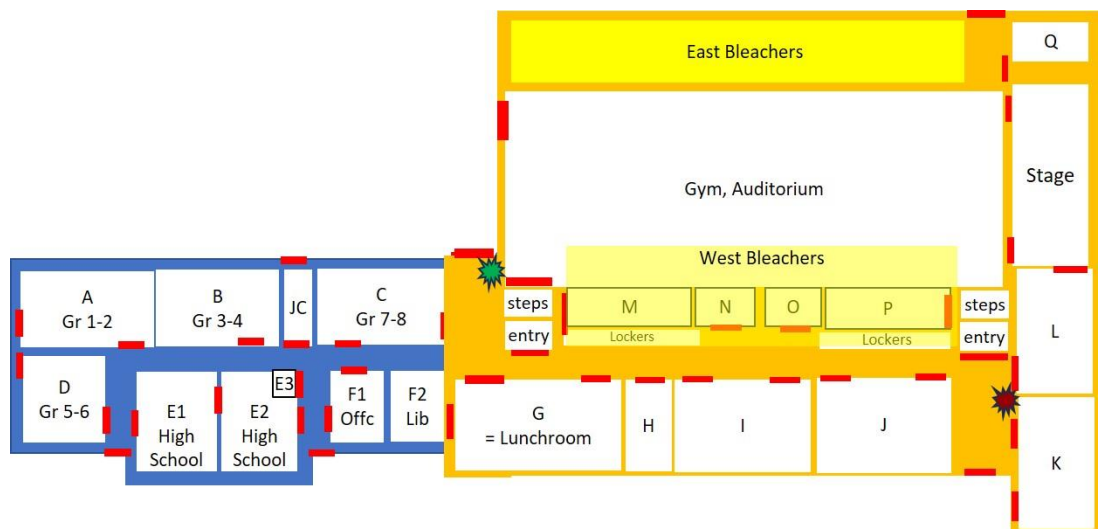


To the right are two more nice early photos of the front of the new addition, the top photo with the buses from the 1956 yearbook and the lower photo with the cars from the 1957 yearbook.

The photo below is perhaps the earliest photo of the back of the new addition, from the 1954 yearbook. The red brick school with the playground behind it is visible to the right of the large gymnasium. The first bus barn is still visible and perhaps the outdoor boys' bathroom. There are 5 large windows at the back (east side) of the gym, the exit door from the south-east corner of the gym and the concrete steps going down, and two small windows at the south end, I am guessing the right (north) one at the east end of the back-stage area and the left (south) one in the small boys' locker/dressing room.



The diagram here shows details of what we believe to have been the original layout of the high school addition, with the red brick building included. Red indicates where doors were located. [This diagram is not yet done to true scale!](#)



4.4.b. The lunchroom and kitchen

As already mentioned, Room G was the lunchroom during lunch-time and likely the study hall during other hours; Room H was the kitchen. There were three stainless steel windows between the kitchen and the lunchroom – one or two for the cooks to serve the food, and the other for students to return their trays with dirty dishes and leftover food for disposal and cleaning. The top photo below, from the 1957 yearbook, provides the most complete view of the south end of the lunchroom. Between the sets of windows there is what appears to be a Coco Kwik cooler and dispenser. To the right of the far-right window into the kitchen, in the southwest corner of the lunchroom, was the Gold Spot milk dispenser for use with lunch; a nice photo of that milk dispenser from the 1957 yearbook is shown in the lower left photo, with the far right (west) window into the kitchen closed. In my days, those who could afford 2 cents per day also got a glass of Gold Spot milk delivered to their classroom in the afternoon, with students indicating earlier in the day who wanted white milk and who wanted chocolate. The lower right photo below, also from the 1957 yearbook, nicely shows the door into the lunchroom from the hallway, the door from the lunchroom into the kitchen at the east end, and the two serving windows. I do not remember clearly whether that doorway from the lunchroom was the only access to the kitchen, or whether there was another doorway into the kitchen from the hallway, as is shown on my floorplan diagram. The photos nicely show the tables and folding chairs.



Two additional early views of the lunchroom are shown below, the left photo of high school students from the 1953 yearbok and the right photo of grade school students from the 1957 yearbook.



Below are photos of the cooks from various yearbooks, which reveal the locations of some of the kitchen appliances and accessories. Yearbooks from which the photos were taken are indicated.



1953



1954



1955



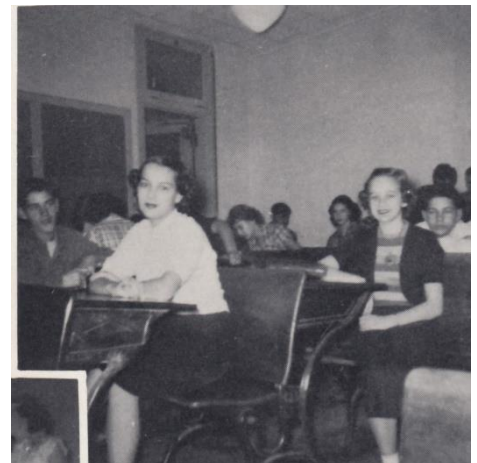
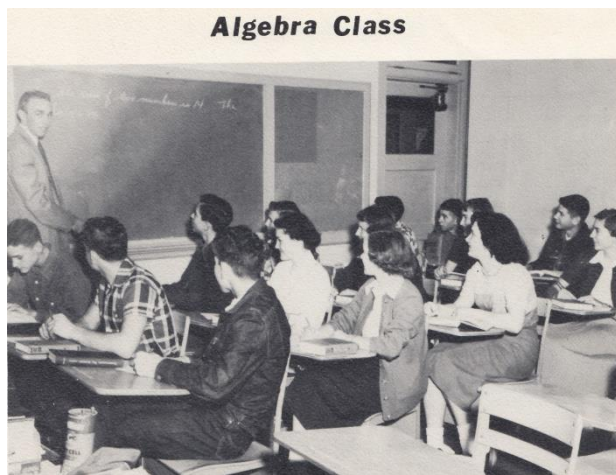
1957



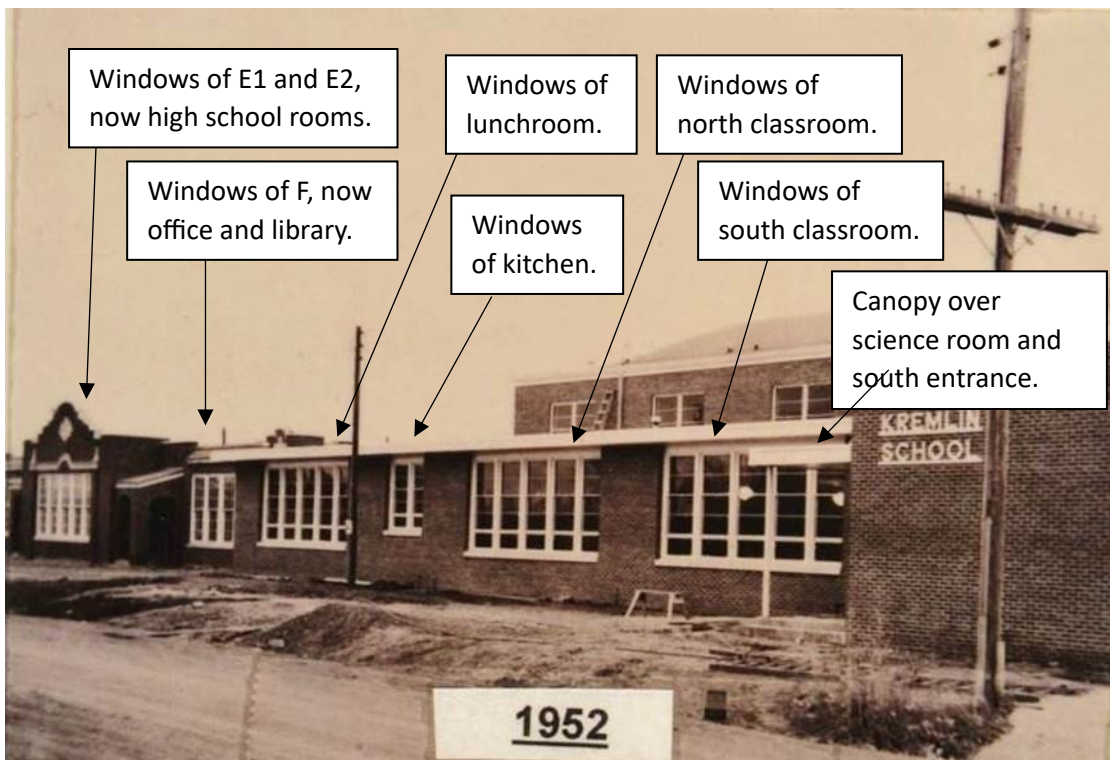
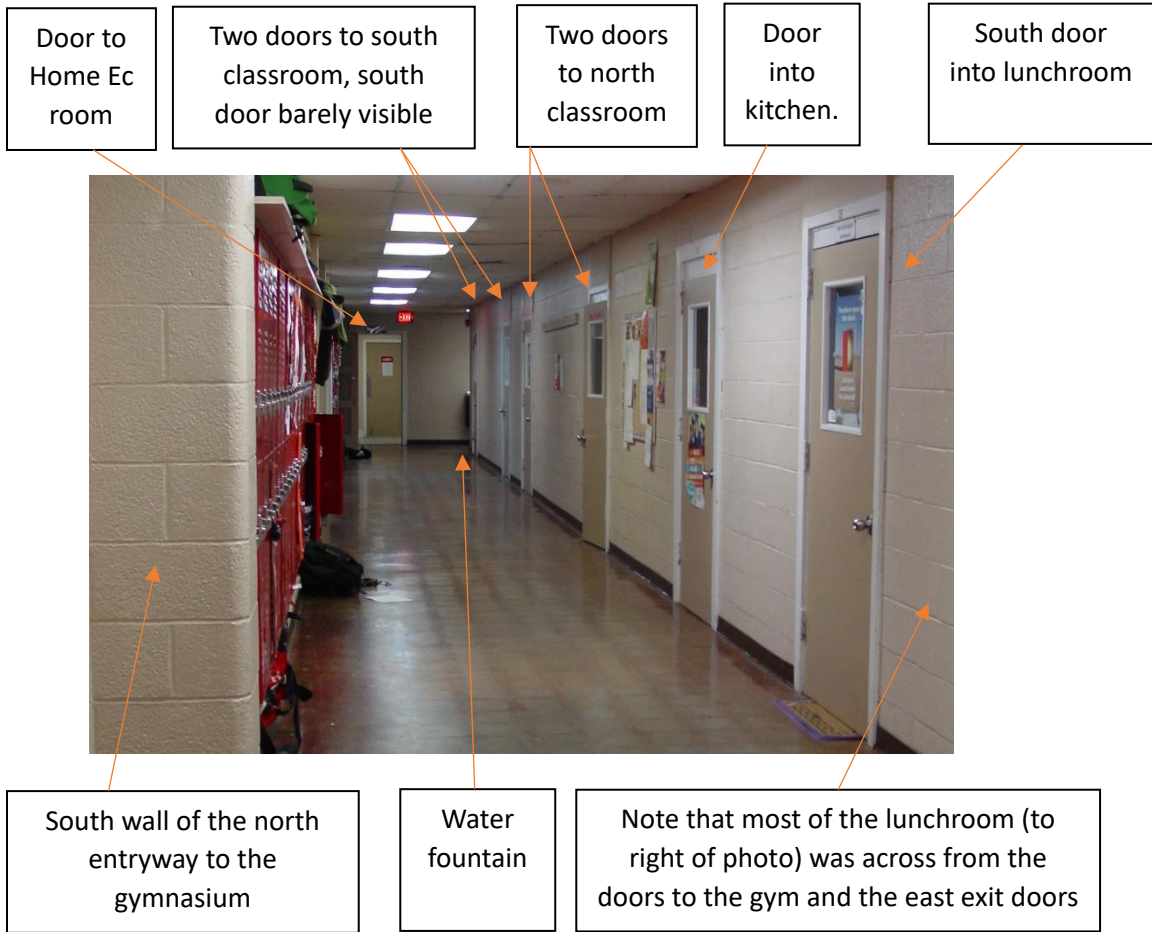
1962

4.4.c. The high school classrooms

Rooms I and J were essentially identical “generic” classrooms, presumably used for a variety of classes and different from year to year. Both had two entrance doors from the hallway on the east side and large windows on the west side. I do not have definitive memories or photos, but there was at least one large blackboard in each room, and most likely two, one on each north wall and one on each east wall between the doors, and with a bulletin board on each side of the blackboards. The Algebra Class photo, top left, is from the 1954 yearbook. The round photo of the south classroom, top right, from the 1956 yearbook, is looking south-west and shows the windows and a bit of the canopy over the science room door and south entry door. The bottom left photo, from the 1962 yearbook, shows another view of the canopy over the science room and south entry door. The only good view I have of the outside door to the science room is in the photo of my brother Arrel standing there a few days before demolition began in 2015, middle photo bottom row. The bottom right photo, from the 1953 yearbook, is included to show the older-style desks, perhaps replaced for the 1953-54 year.



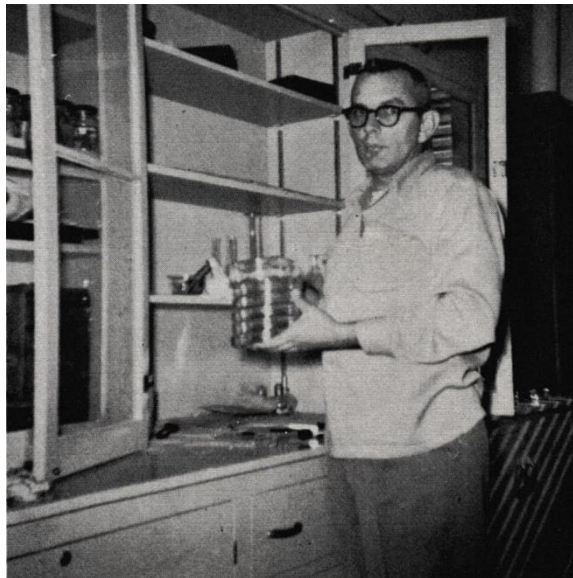
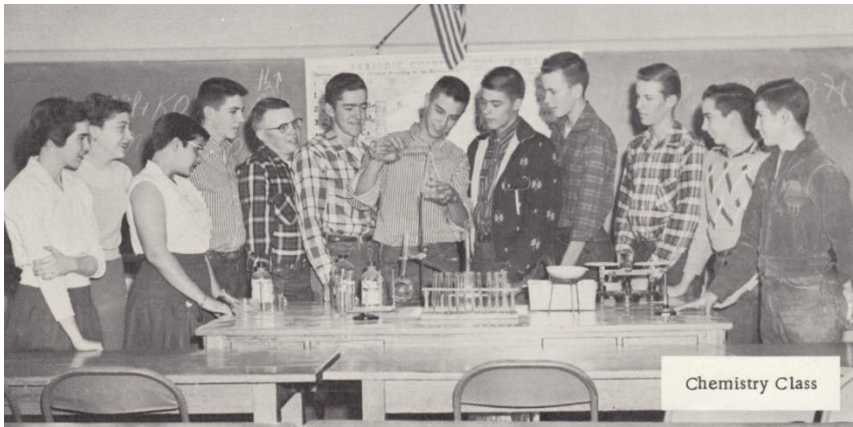
Below are some photos to put the rooms described so far into perspective, from inside and outside.



4.4.d. The science room

Rooms K and L were the science room and the home ec room, respectively. As shown in the layout diagram, the science room and the home ec room were on another hallway, running east-west, from the south front door of the school and to the south doors into the gymnasium. For reasons that are not clear, the science room had both a door from the hallway but another door from the covered porch area that sheltered the south entrance door and the west door into the science room.

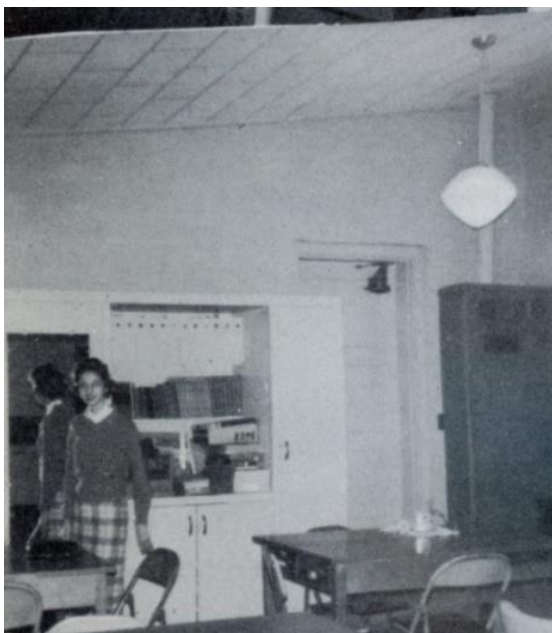
A few photos of the science room are shown here. The top left photo, from the 1957 yearbook, shows a chemistry experiment in front of the blackboard, which was at the west end. The top right photo, also 1957, shows the specimens and equipment cabinet with glass-front doors and the tall heater in the corner, as well as the wet lab sink at the west end. The bottom left photo, from the 1959 yearbook, gives a clear view of the specimens and equipment cabinet. The lower right photo, again 1957, shows the teacher's desk at the front, a student using a microscope to the right, and a biology poster on an easel in the back.



4.4.e. The home ec room

There was a door into the home ec room at the intersection of the long north-south hallway and the shorter east-west hallway, on the south wall of the east-west hallway, just before the south entrance to the gymnasium.

The kitchen area was on the west wall, as shown in the top two photos, left from the 1958 yearbook, right from 1959; this allowed the same plumbing to go the water fountain in the hallway. The middle right photo, from the 1953 yearbook, shows the sewing machines under the windows on the south wall. A mirror, storage closets for projects, and an area for trying on clothes that were being made was in the north-east corner, as shown in the two bottom photos, left from the 1961 yearbook, right from 1961. Further south on the east wall was a door that led up to the back-stage area, allowing the home-ec room to also be used as a dressing room for plays and musical performances, as seen in the lower left photo. This photo also shows the ceiling sloping from south to north for this wing of the building. The lower right photo is of the northeast corner and shows the door from the hallway into the home ec room. I believe there was a stove at the south end of the west wall; location of the refrigerator remains unknown.



The girls not only learned how to set a proper table, as shown top left, from the 1954 yearbook, but how to host and serve meal as well, with some of the high school boys as dinner guests, as shown in the top right photo below, from 1956. The lower left photo shows one of the girls being quite impressed with seeing herself from four angles in the mirrors, from the 1953 yearbook. The lower right photo, from the 1958 yearbook, shows one of the sewing projects on its dress-form, perhaps to make a headless classmate also?



Unknown to most is the fact that Peggy and Ginger Semrad went to beauty school in the summer in their late high school years. To the right is a photo of them demonstrating their hair design skills in the Home Ec room.

Peggy and Faith Mary remembered that the home ec room was also used as the concession stand for ball games in their grade school days. A table was set up in front of the kitchen area, and 7th and 8th graders took turns selling candy and pop there, with the goal of raising funds to buy the shiny "velvet" ball uniforms worn by the grade school teams in their day and ours.



4.4.f. Drinking fountains and pop coolers

At a minimum, there were drinking fountains at the south end of the high school, between the doors into the home ec room and the science room. This was also a convenient location for getting a drink of water for patrons at the ball games and other events in the gymnasium.

The top right photo, from the 1953 yearbook, shows only one porcelain double fountain, uncooled water; the door to the science room is just visible to the right. The left and middle lower photos, from the 1953 and 1960 yearbooks, show both that fountain and a new upright refrigerated water fountain. The top left photo nicely confirms the location of the water fountains, with the door into the home ec room showing behind the girls, as well as the entry door into the south end of the gymnasium. The middle photo below shows an electric lighted photo hanging above the two fountains, plus the open door into the gym. The lower right photo shows the custodian outside of room J, with the door to room J visible, as well as the photo above the water fountains. The bottom left and right photos also show the historic senior photo panels hanging up high on both the east and west walls of the hallway. This water fountain is indicated by the green star with the red center in the room layout diagram.



In addition to water fountains, there appears to have been a long history of soda pop being available also. Several people involved in their senior trip planning and funding remember using pop sales in the school as a way for each class to raise money for their senior trips or for other class projects or donations. The left photo at the top of the next page, from the 1954 yearbook, appears to me at least to be of a pop machine in the janitor's closet, based on the low ceiling. The janitor's closet would have had a low ceiling, which was in fact a raised floor, because of its prior life as the stage in the original red brick school building. The door behind the boys would be consistent with the east door leading out of the janitor's closet to the playground area to the east of that room.

The right photo below, from the 1960 yearbook, includes Errol Wofford, and it was clearly identified by him as being just north of the north-east corner of the gym; the wall behind the pop machine is the north wall of the north entry into the gymnasium, and the door to the left in the photo is the "new" door leading out to the north end of the gymnasium and the south side of the playground, in the new space connecting the 6-room school building to the new high school. This is the area identified by the green star on the room layout diagram.



Note that there is also a water fountain to the lower right of the pop machine in the second photo. This would have been the water fountain that would have been more easily accessible for the grade school students in the original 6-room building, just outside the door of what is now the 7th and 8th grade room. This would also have been directly opposite the north door entrance into the lunchroom and study hall.

4.4.g. Dressing rooms and bathrooms under the west bleachers, and the main north-south hallway

Across the hall from the lunchroom and at the east end of the east-west hallway in front of the science and home ec rooms were doors into a "foyer area" and then steps leading up into the gym, at both ends. West of the gym, under the west bleachers, were the boys' locker room to the north (M), with the boys' bathroom connected to the south (N); and a mirror image girls' locker room (P) and bathroom to the south (O).

We have no photos of either bathroom; the photo to the right of Coach Bill Stout, from the 1954 yearbook, may be under the west bleachers at the south end of the boys' dressing room.



Last modified 09-07-2024

Below are several photos of the girls' dressing room, all from the 1960 yearbook. The left photo shows a bit of the bleachers slanting above in the upper left corner, slanting from left to right, east to west, above the dressing room, and the door coming into the dressing room from the foyer at the south end; out that door and up the stairs to the left and the girls were on the basketball court, at the stage end of the gymnasium. The middle and left photos show the lockers, a comfortable chair, and a mirror for the girls to look their best, on or off of the basketball court!



There were doors into both boys' and girls' bathrooms from the long north-south hallway, approximately opposite from the kitchen and room I. Inside the boys' bathroom were 2 or 3 open toilet stalls to the north on the east wall, and a "group" urinal for 2-3 students at the south end, with a sink between the urinal and the door to the hallway; I can only presume that the girls' bathroom had one or two additional stalls in place of the urinal in the boys' bathroom, and perhaps the stalls had doors, unlike the boys' room. These bathrooms were also used by the grade school students, who had to walk a long way down the hall from the original 6-room building into the new high school to get to the bathrooms. And then, at least for the boys, there was worry about being tormented in the bathroom by the high school boys; several had such tales of terror to share; and grade school students did not always make it to those bathrooms in time! High school students usually waited until the breaks between classes to go to the bathroom, but some presumably got permission to go there during class as well.

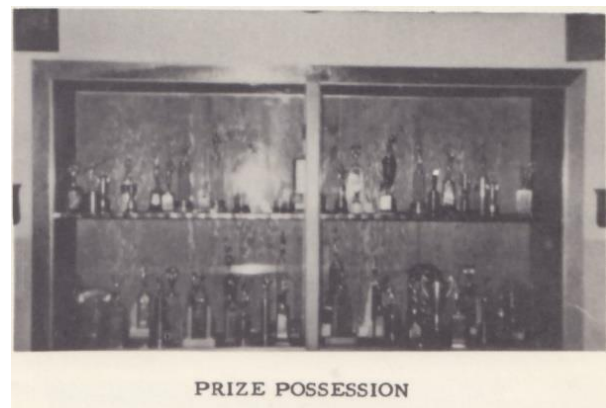
On the east hallway wall in front of the bathrooms were the lockers, both north and south of the bathroom entry doors. These were stacked half-high lockers, as shown in the photo to the right, from the 1960 yearbook. Senior photo panels hung above the lockers, as seen in the right photo, with the south entry area to the gym and home ec room barely visible in the background. More senior photos hung high on the west wall also, as shown on page 16.



The photo to the right, again from the 1960 yearbook, shows the half-height lockers, this time with the top locker open. An important element in this photo is that it seems to be at the south end of the north set of lockers; the young boys at the lower right are presumably lined up to get into the boys' bathroom, which would have been just to the right (south) of this north set of lockers.



From the best of people's memories and from photos, there was a trophy case in the hallway, located between the two doors to the girls' and boys' bathrooms – the "prize possession" in the photo to the right below, from the 1951 yearbook. The left photo below, from the 1956 yearbook, gives the best view of the location of this trophy case – looking to the north, the north lockers are seen behind the girls, the door to the boys' bathroom in front (south) of that, and then the trophy case at the front right of the photo.



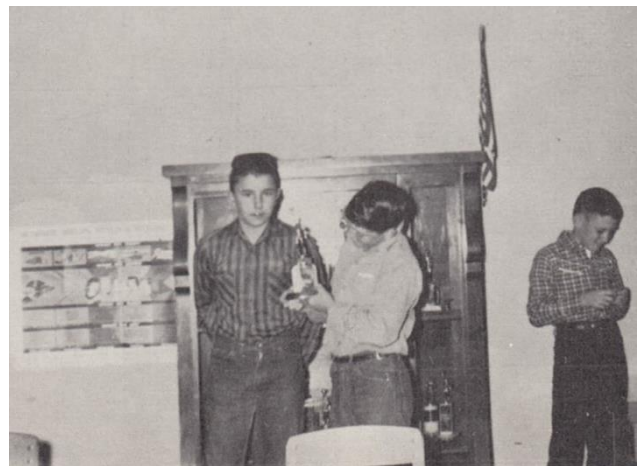
To the right are two color photos of the hallway from a few days before demolition of the school began. They seem to confirm the trophy case location from the older photos above, though it is not certain whether any changes may have been made of the 60+ years between these photos! The left photo is looking south; the right photo, looking north, provides a nice view into what was the 7th-8th grade room in the 1950s and 1960s and the "jog" due to different widths of the grade school and high school hallways.



As mentioned earlier, there were years when trophies were displayed in the library as well; which trophies were where, and why, is not known. The left photo, from the 1955 yearbook, and the right photo, from the 1961 yearbook, show that trophies were displayed in the library over many years. The right photo also shows the door from the east-west hallway into the library.

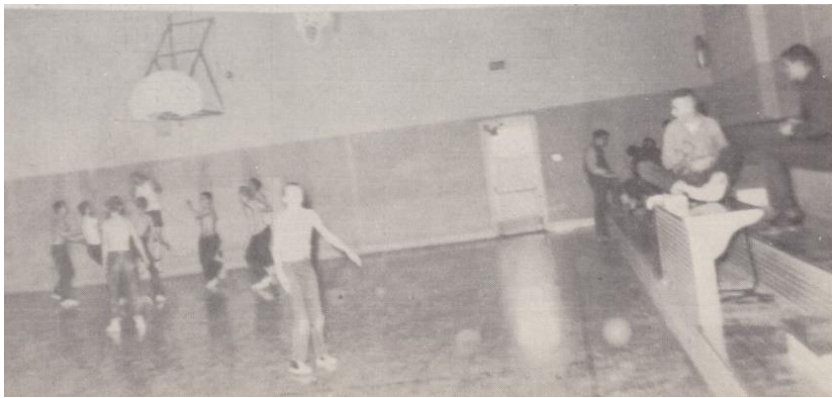


There are also photos that show a smaller free-standing trophy case in one of the classrooms. This was almost certainly the grade school trophy case, always showing up with grade school photos. I suspect that it was in the 7th-8th grade room, because those are the students who would have been the major players on all of the grade school sports teams. A couple of photos are below, both from the 1957 yearbook; the right photo shows a student inspecting one of the trophies.



4.4.h. The gymnasium and bleachers

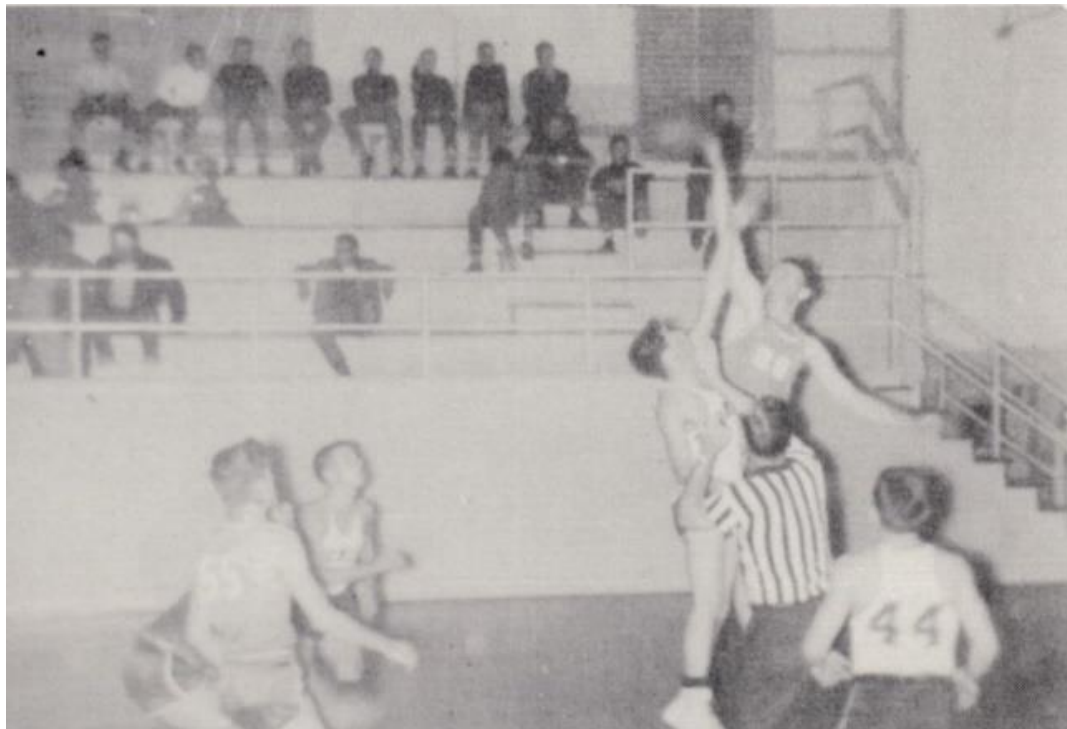
The gym had one door to the outside at the east end of the north side and another at the south end of the east side, just north of the stage. The scoreboard was on the north wall above the exit door at the north end of the gym. There were floor-level bleacher seats on the east side, from the east exit door all the way to the north wall. In the center of those bleachers was a raised score-keepers' table. In addition, there was a third basketball goal above the west bleachers that could be lowered for additional shooting practice. The top left photo below, from the 1956 yearbook, nicely shows the north basketball goal, permanently attached, the north exit door out to the playground area in the early years of the new gymnasium, and the score-keepers' table at the center of the east bleachers. The top right photo, from the 1954 yearbook, shows the scoreboard above the door, the third goal that could be raised or lowered, and the tall windows on the east wall.



The cheerleaders' photo to the left below, from the 1960 yearbook, nicely shows the polished wood gym floor, the score-keepers table, and the steps to get to the higher levels of the east bleachers. The middle photo below, of the pep squad from the 1953 yearbook, shows the north-east corner of the gym, both the door and the steps going up. The right photo below, cropped from a music program photo from the 1957 yearbook, shows the south end of the east bleachers and the exit door out the east side of the gym between the bleachers and the stage. Both east doors were at gym floor-level and higher than the grounds outside; both west doors were at the hallway level and had steps going up/down between the hallway and the gym floor-level.



There were raised bleachers on the west side, high enough to be above the locker rooms and bathrooms below them, with symmetrical steps going up from both the north and south ends. The center of those bleachers is nicely shown in the baseball team photo below, from the 1956 yearbook, including the railing, the steps going up in the middle, and a row of benches at the very top. The bottom photo, also from 1956, shows those bleachers "in action", including the steps up at the north end.



The photo to the right, again from 1956, nicely shows the door coming into the north end of the gym from the long north-south hallway, with a few steps up to gym floor level, and then steps going up to the north end of the west bleachers. The photos below are two similar views of the south end of the west bleachers, of the doors coming into the gym from in front of the home ec room, the stairs going up, and a view to the top of the bleachers; left photo from 1953, right photo from 1957. The left photo also provides perhaps the best view of the south doors from the hallway into the gym. Entrance to the girls' dressing room is between the girls on the stairs and those doors.



The gym had four large gas heaters with powerful blowers, hung from the ceiling, one in each corner. There are no great photos of these, and always at the very top edge; at the north-west and south-east corners can be seen below, from the 1956 (left) and 1957 (right) yearbooks.



4.4.i. The stage area

At each end of the stage was a door with steps leading up to the back-stage area and/or onto the stage. The only good photo of these is the one to the right, taken a few days before demolition of the school, with lots of leftover items on the stage. In these later days, the basketball goal was mounted to the ceiling and could be raised to allow full view of the stage.



However, in its earlier days, including my school years, the basketball goal was mounted onto the stage floor by a complicated apparatus that allowed it to be removed for use of the gym floor as an auditorium and use of the stage as a place for performances. It had to be loosened from the floor and then tilted and rolled out of the way for use of the stage.

The photo to the right, from the 1954 yearbook, fairly clearly shows the complicated fold-up apparatus and the wheels that allowed it to be moved back-stage. The two photos below, from 1953 (left) and 1956 (right), show the goal apparatus in place and padded, in spite of there being performers on the stage. The goal would not have been removed for performances that were at half-time or between boys' and girls' basketball games.



Here is a photo of the stage in use as a stage rather than a mounting point for the basketball goal, from the 1956 yearbook, with the mounting apparatus removed and stored in the back-stage area somewhere. Note the pop-up stage lights also, which I did not remember at all. There was a significant cellar or crawl-space under the gym, which would have given access to the wiring for these lights. There are school stories about escapades in that "cellar" also. I believe that the wooden box is the conductor's platform and not meant to cover up the holes for the basketball goal apparatus.

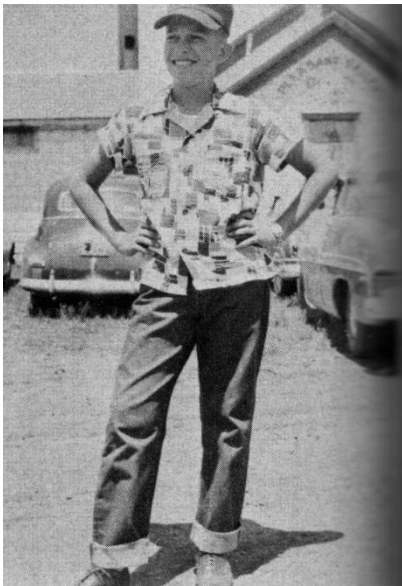


Major uses of the west end of the gymnasium and the stage were for musical performances, plays, and coronations of the various "royalty". Some early additional photos of these events that nicely show the use of the stage are shown below. The "Ready for Santa" photo again shows the raised lights at the front of the stage. Music group and performance photos generally show the piano on the gym floor at the east end of the stage, presumably to avoid it being lifted onto the stage for these performances. There are many more photos of these kinds of events on the stage in later yearbooks; I have focused on earliest photos here, wherever possible. These yearbook photos are from 1955 (top left), 1954 (top right), 1954 (bottom left), and 1955 (bottom right)

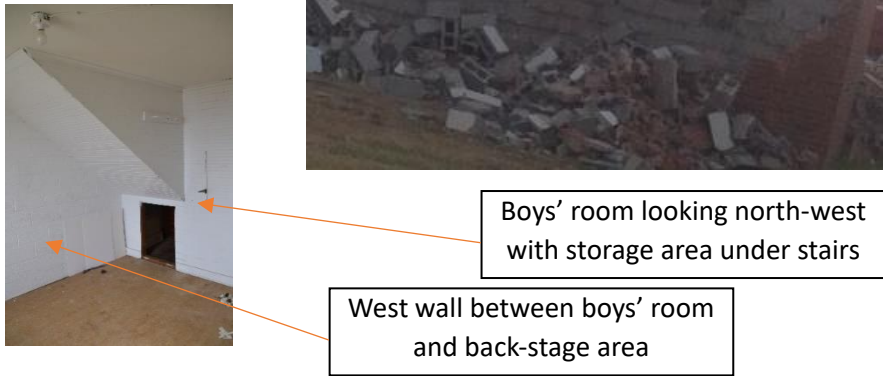
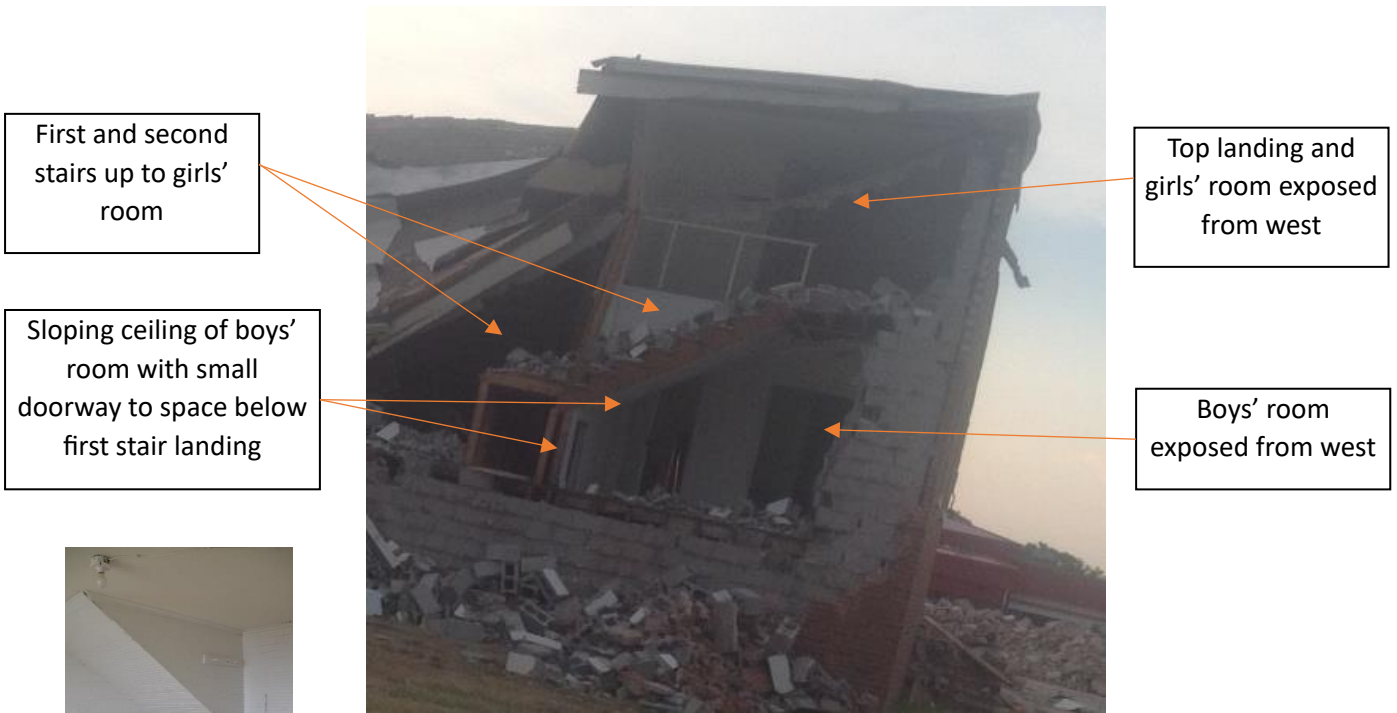


Of interest, the 1952 yearbook boasts photos of the new school from the outside, but “event” photos are still using the original stage at the south end of room B of the red brick school. This may be because the new building was completed in the spring of 1952, barely in time to include a photo in the yearbook, but with most events in that yearbook having still been in the red brick building. Alternatively, it could be that the stage was not completed until a half year later or so, while the other parts of the building were in use. The first photo of the new stage in use is in the 1953 yearbook.

The 1953 yearbook still shows some student photos at the Community Hall, suggesting that some events may have continued to use this building. The building to the left is the Community Hall, and the building to the right is the Pleasant Valley one-room school-house (name visible in left photo), moved next to the Community Hall at some point and likely used as a dressing room, with a wooden connector to the Community Hall.



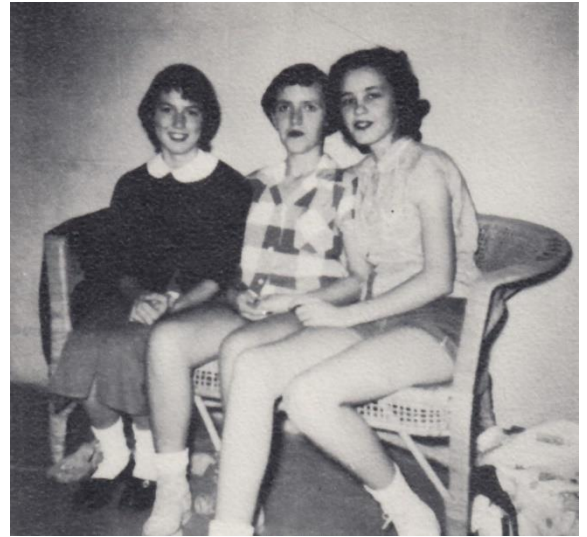
At the east end of the stage were two small locker/dressing rooms, used for grade school sports and, I believe, for visiting basketball teams. These were very likely also used as dressing rooms for plays and other performances on the stage. On the stage floor level was the boys' room, with an entry door from the north. At the back (south) end of the boys' room was a sloping ceiling, which was the bottom of the steps leading up to the girls' room above. Access to the girls' room was by a stairway at the west end of the boys' room leading halfway up to the south to a small landing, then a second flight of stairs leading up to the east to a landing that led to the girls' room. These features are reasonably clearly visible and marked in the photos below, taken just before and then during demolition of the school in 2015.



Here is a view of the east end of the stage from the south, showing two windows on south wall of the boys' room and one window on the south wall of girls' room. This suggests changes to windows at some point, because the early (1954) view of this part of the school shows two windows on the east wall of the stage area and none on the south wall. My best guess is that the two dressing rooms east of the stage may not have been there originally but were added a few years later, perhaps with the east wall windows removed, perhaps not. [I am still on the hunt for good more recent photos of the south end of the east wall of the gymnasium to see what windows were there at the time of the first photo below.](#)



Below are some photos of the inside of this girls' locker room, in the years when Peggy and Faith Mary remember it as their "clubhouse" also. These are photos that Faith Mary shared with me and are not in any of the yearbooks; so thanks to Faith for this! The top left photo is of the girls' basketball team in their new shiny blue uniforms; the bottom left photo is of the room as their clubhouse and lounge. The photo to the right is, I believe, the only early photo in this room, from the 1954 yearbook; the wicker furniture matches that in the first two photos.

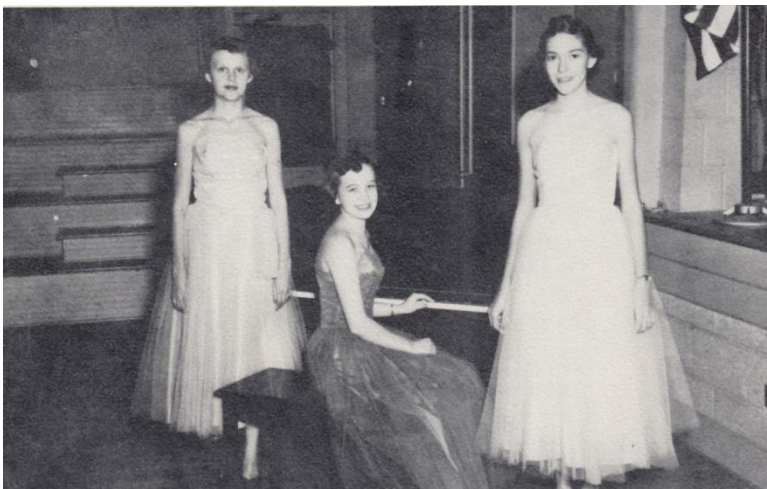


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4.3.j. Music classes

In these years, prior to 1957, there was no dedicated music room. Where music was taught is not clear, and perhaps it moved from room to room. A significant issue would have been moving the piano from the music room for classes into and out of the auditorium for performances. A few photos of music classes are shown below, [in hopes of jogging memories from others about where music was taught when](#). The top left photo is from the 1955 yearbook, room unknown; top right, from 1956, clearly in one of the two high school classrooms; bottom left, from 1954, obviously in south-east corner of gym near the stage; bottom right, one of my favorite music program photos, of the "Living Christmas Tree", is from 1954 also. The next chapter will cover the first dedicated music room (and shop) addition.



4.5. Outside the school

Many aspects of the outside of the buildings have been mentioned and shown already. The first bus barn was still close to the north end of the red brick building. Cars parked in the open area south of the science and home ec rooms, with access from the west. Cars also parked in front of the school, mainly toward the south end. Buses picked up students in front of the school, near the junction of the red brick building and the new high school. The north doors from the red brick building remained, as did both of the original doors on the west side. The entrance in front of the science room and under the canopy has been mentioned, and also the exits from the gym to the east and to the north.

A double-wide doorway was added between the original 6-room building (now the grade school) and the gymnasium on the east side. This is shown in one of the pop machine photos earlier. This allowed those at the south end of the original building, and high school students, to gain access to the area behind the 6-room school and north of the gymnasium from that door; those in the two north rooms of the original school used their north doors to go outside. The main reason for going out these doors was to go to the playground that was east of the 6-room building and north of the gymnasium; there was no longer a need to use these doors to get to the outdoor bathrooms!

Some of the early photos of the playground are shown below; again, there are many more in later yearbooks. There was a merry-go-round, three teeter-totters, two sets of monkey bars, and a swing set; perhaps more. The baseball field remained somewhere to the north and/or east of the first bus barn. There was plenty of additional space to explore during recess to the east of the school and playground and the ball field; for a while, some earlier buildings remained, along with piles of concrete and other remains from the school additions and demolitions.

The "Get in line" and "Recess Time" photos below are from the 1955 yearbook; "Get in line" nicely shows the bus barn and a school bus. The next four photos are all from 1956 and show the slide, teeter-totters, merry-go-round, and swings.





The photo to the left below, from the 1956 yearbook, is a bit of a puzzle; the orientation does not seem right for the building to be the bus barn, and/or the bus barn now has a large hole in back. That photo includes one set of monkey bars also. Arrel thinks he remembers this building as storage for baseball equipment. The photo to the right below shows the baseball field further north, from the 1953 yearbook already.



4.6. Looking ahead, moving on

What a fine and plenty big new school for Kremlin, right? But already by the time of the latest photos in this chapter, more additions and changes were in the works. Read on into Chapters 5-10 to see all of the additions and changes yet to come!

[Return to chapter list](#)

Chapter 5. The shop and music room addition

Acknowledgements and thanks to those who contributed to this chapter:

My brother Arrel Toews, Class of 1966, for his own memories, and for help with editing and style and content suggestions

Ellis Toews, Class of 1966

Dennis Toews, Class of 1965

Jakie Lee Rempel, in Class of 1962, but left after freshman year, by phone and email

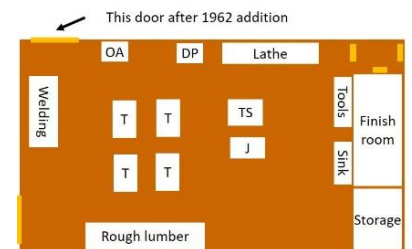
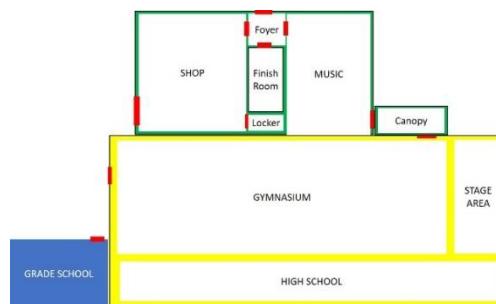
Russell Lloyd, Class of 1969

5.1. Overview of the building addition

The next addition to the school was a shop and music room, built onto the east side of the gymnasium and completed for the 1957-58 school year, based on both yearbook photos and a few students' clear memories of having Shop class in this building at the start of the 1957-58 school year. Unfortunately, I currently have no photos of the outside of this building; [if anyone has those photos, please share!](#) Fortunately, there are a reasonable number of good photos from the inside of both rooms to help with memories of the room layouts.

Below is a sketch of the floor layout of this addition as best I remember it, not yet to perfect scale, and with the grade school building truncated; [if anyone has additional or different clear memories, please let me know!](#) The north end of the shop was perhaps 6-8 feet south of the north end of the gym, with an entry door close to the back (east) side of the gym. The south end of the music room was perhaps 8-10 feet north of the east exit door from the gym. Steps from that door had previously gone down to the south; new steps were added to go north to the music room entry door from the gym. In addition, a covered but open walkway was added north from the steps to the south door of the music room. There was an entry into a foyer from the east, between the two rooms, which had doors to the shop, to the music room, and into the finish room between the shop and music room. The north door to the shop was double-wide and large enough for getting large equipment and lumber into the building. The shop was a good bit larger than the music room, and the main part of the shop had a higher ceiling. Between the two rooms and west of the foyer was the ventilated and "clean" finish room, for final staining and varnishing of projects, without exposure to the dust of the main shop. There were windows into the finish room from both the shop and the music room. Behind the finish room (to the west) was a storage area, where smaller projects were stored between classes and where watches and rings and jackets could be stored during class. I well remember this area, because my watch, an 8th grade graduation present, was stolen from this area during my freshman year Shop 1 class. Arrel remembers there being a rough lumber rack in that room in his Shop 1 days, 1962-63.

The left photo below, taken days before demolition, shows this addition. The center diagram is the layout of the addition. The right image below is a more detailed layout of the Shop room and equipment and supplies. Arrel and Russell Lloyd remember the jointer being closer to the north wall than where I have it. Arrel's memory is that 1965-1966, his senior Shop 2 year and my freshman Shop 1 year, was the first year that welding was offered. Arrel remembers welding outside of the north-east corner door, not in the welding booths area as shown. Arrel also remembers the task board on the south wall, with all the students having little wood blocks with their names painted on them, these getting moved up each week, so everyone had a rotating task at end of class. Arrel kept his and it is in his garage workshop to remind him to always clean up when he is done; photo below.



T = work tables; J = jointer; TS = table saw; DP = drill press; OA = oxy-acetylene



5.2 The shop

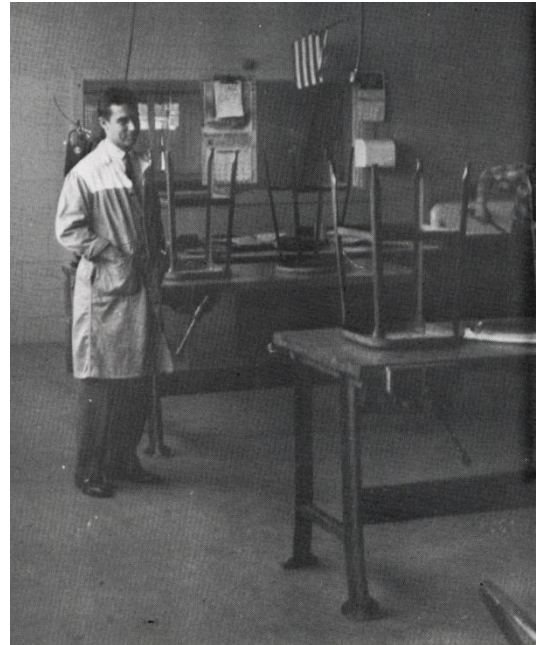
Below are two of the earliest photos of the shop, from the 1958 yearbook, the first year of this addition. Both photos are taken looking to the north-east corner of the shop. The pre-fab steel beam ceiling trusses show in the right photo.



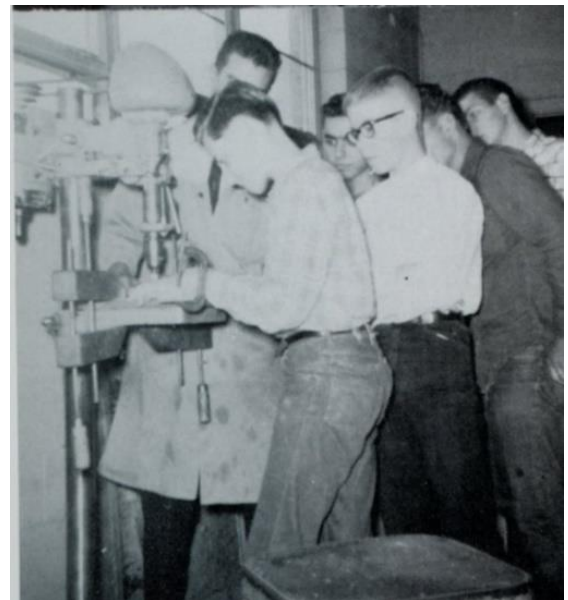
Two photos below show nice views of the north-west corner of the shop, with the double entry doors from the north, the gas heater hanging from the ceiling, and the lumber rack at the north end of the west wall. The top left photo is from the 1961 yearbook, top right from 1960. The bottom right photo, from the 1959 yearbook, shows the door into the storage locker area, in the south-west corner of the shop.



The left photo below, from the 1959 yearbook, provides the best view of the south wall of the shop, with the windows into the finish room behind the boys and the wide clean-up sink at the far right. The photo to the right with long-time shop teacher Dwayne Janzen, from the 1963 yearbook, shows a similar view, but also provides the best view of the “butcher block top” work tables, with a wood vise on each side.



The top left photo below, from the 1960 yearbook, shows the lathe, which was near the south end of the east wall, close to the door into the foyer. The windows are nicely shown here also. The right photo below, from the 1965 yearbook, shows the drill press, which we remember being just north of the lathe. The bottom left photo, also from 1965, shows the hand-tool cabinet, to the left of the window into the finish room and to the right of the door into the foyer.



5.3 The music room

There is less to be said about the music room, which was basically a large open room, with windows to the outside on the south and east walls and into the finish room on the north wall. These windows were covered with shades in their early years, as shown in the photos below from the 1959 yearbook. The top left photo is taken further to the west than the top right photo and also shows the blackboard and/or bulletin board at the west end of the north wall. The top right photo shows the window into the shop finish room behind the students.



The photo to the right, from the 1963 yearbook, shows the south wall windows, with the door leading to the entrance to the south end of the gym at the far right, barely visible. The left photo below, from the 1964 yearbook, shows a nice view of the entire north-east corner of the room, with the finish room windows, the door to the foyer, and the east windows. The bottom right photo, also from 1964, shows the new steps out the east gym door, going down both ways, and the canopy over the walkway to the music room. This photo also shows a window into the grade school boys' locker room at the east end of the stage.



Chapter 6. The lunchroom, kitchen, and hallway addition - 1962

Acknowledgements and thanks to those who contributed to this chapter:

Peggy Smith Guthrie Harris, Class of 1962, who not only provided her own memories but passed on memories from her cousins and others, or helped me to connect with them myself

Errol Wofford, Class of 1961, for his memories

Jo Ann Toews Rice, Class of 1964, for her memories of her mom as cook, in both old and new kitchens

My brother Arrel Toews, Class of 1966, for his memories

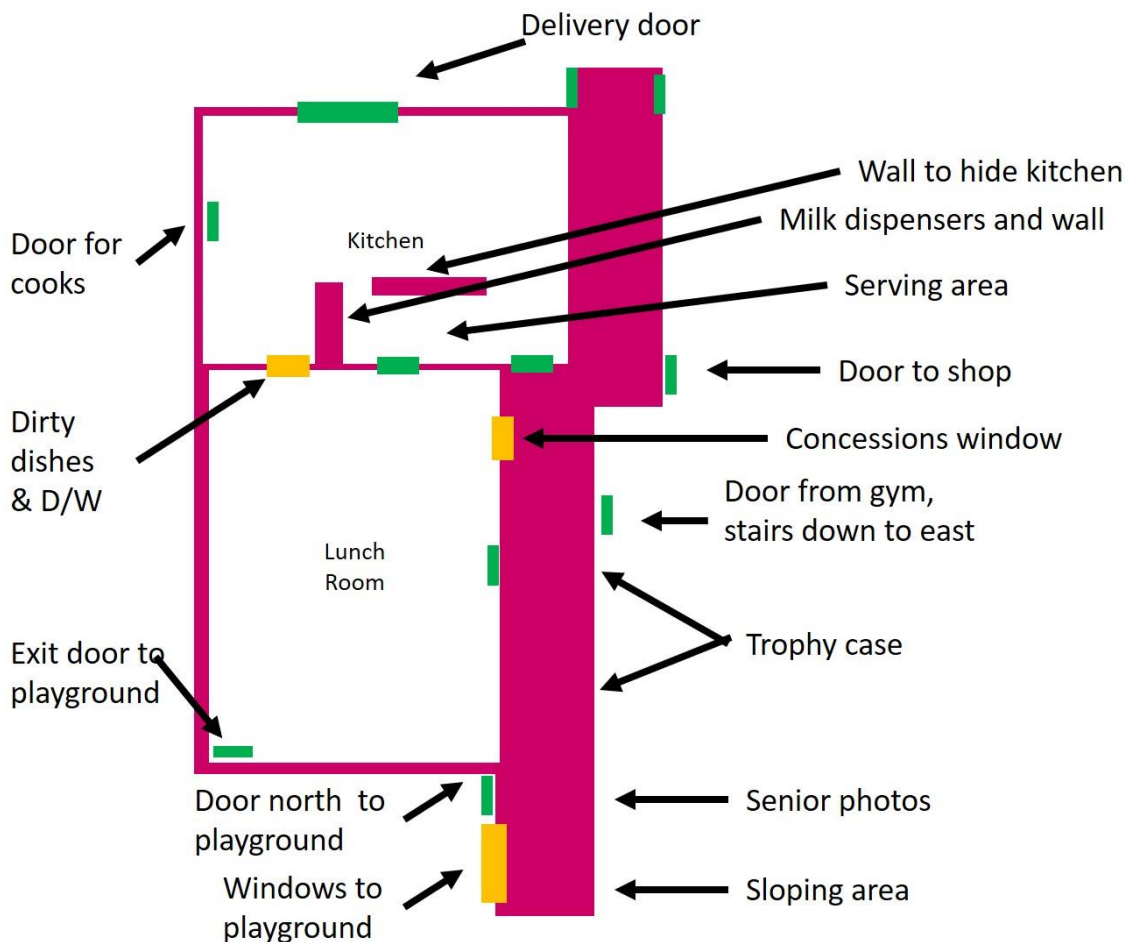
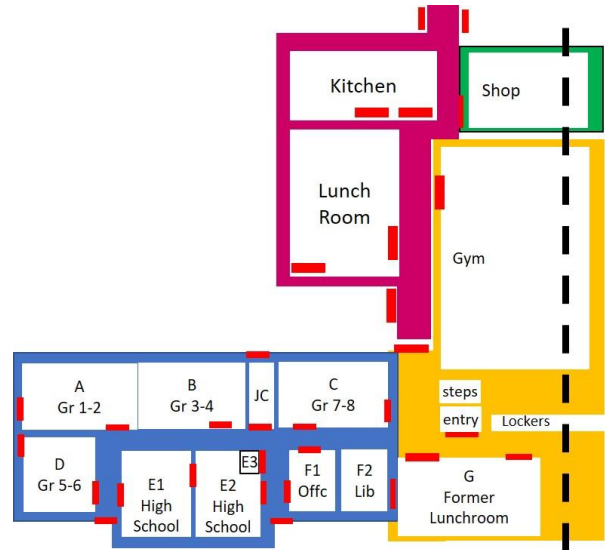
Eldon Toews, Class of 1967

Pam Voth, Class of 1977, for a very important answer to what was a puzzle for me

My brother Arrel Toews, Class of 1966, for help with editing and style content suggestions

6.1. Overview of the addition

The next addition to the school, in maroon, was a new modern and larger kitchen and lunchroom built onto the north wall of the gymnasium, along with a hallway for access to the kitchen and lunchroom and to the shop. The kitchen area was at the east end, with the lunchroom larger and to the west. There was perhaps a 20-ft open space left between the west wall of the lunchroom and the east wall of the first 6-room red brick building. This addition is shown under early construction in the 1962 yearbook, indicating that it was presumably finished that summer and ready for use for the 1962-63 school year. The right diagram shows perhaps imperfect location of the addition in marron; the bottom diagram shows additional key features. [More memories and photos needed for this addition, especially the hallway features!](#)



6.2. The building

The left photo below shows the building beginning construction, from the 1962 yearbook. Based on the gymnasium window showing, this must be the east (back) wall of the kitchen, looking west. The window would be the window at the north end of the east wall of the gym; we are fairly certain that what appears to be another window seen through that window must in fact be the reflection of that east-side window on the north wall of the gym. There were no locations in the gym with two windows on opposite sides of a corner. The left photo below has been reversed from the way it was printed in the yearbook, the only orientation that makes sense.



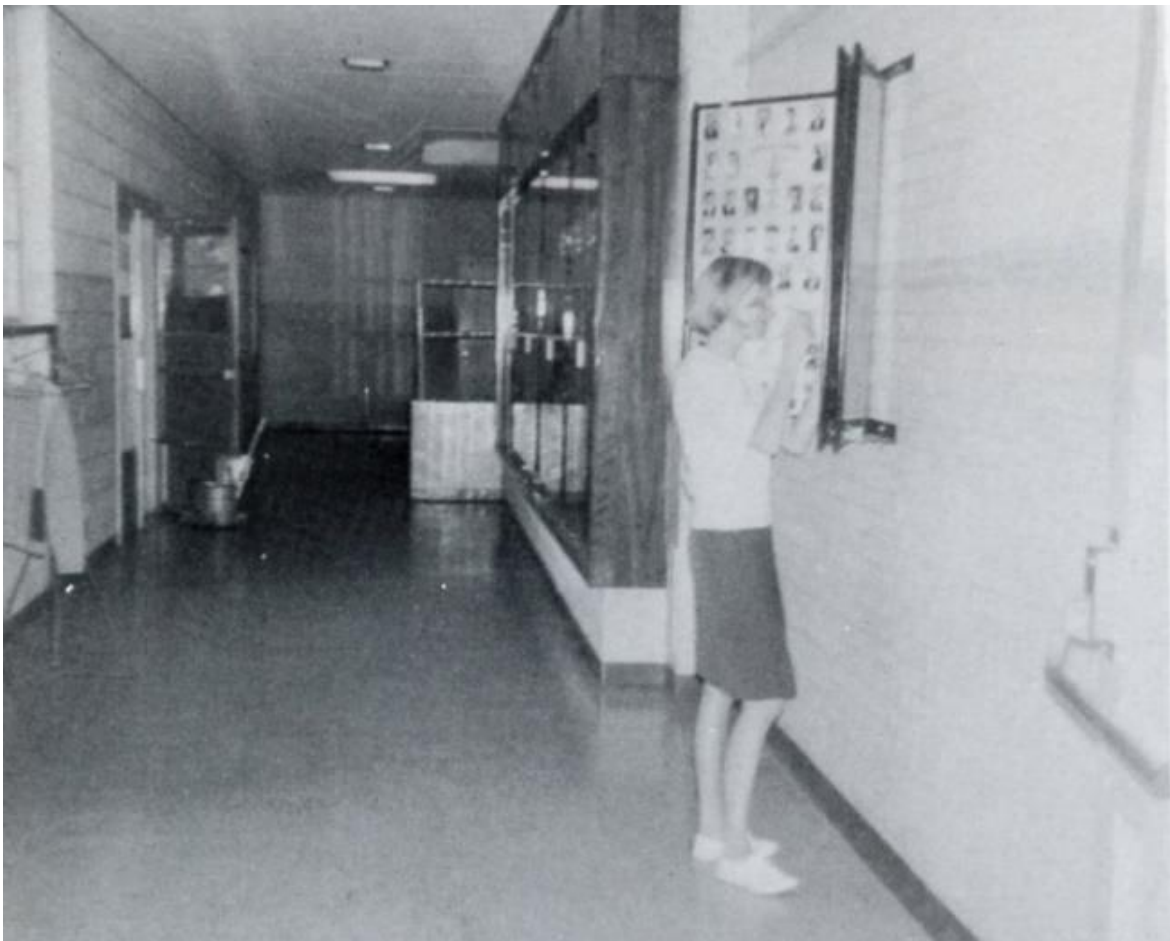
The door shown in the left photo above is the door for food and supplies to be delivered into the kitchen area. The right photo above, from the 1967 yearbook, shows the row of windows all along the north wall of the lunchroom, the exit door on the west wall, and part of the space between the new building and the 6-room red brick school building to the west. The area between the two buildings was mostly concrete, to avoid mud, and with a four-square court and sheltered play area, shown in the photo to the right, also from 1967. The playground was moved further north to make room for this addition, as shown in the left photo below, from 1965. Another door into the kitchen from the north is shown in this photo also. The right photo below, from the 1967 yearbook, is of the east side of the building at the north end; it shows what appears to be a ventilation window there, along with cheerleaders practicing. It is a bit puzzling to me that playground equipment is not apparent in this photo.



6.3. The connecting hallway

Besides the new kitchen and lunchroom, another very important part of this addition was a hallway leading to all things north and east, from the double doors exiting the previous buildings between the 7th-8th grade classroom and the north entrance to the gym. This hallway sloped down from its west entrance to the floor level of the kitchen/lunchroom and the shop room. At ground level on the left, as I remember it, was a door out to the area between the new lunchroom and the 6-room brick building, and beyond that were large windows looking out to that area; I have no photos to document this door. At the bottom of the ramp on the right was a new set of swinging display windows for the senior photo panels, and further east from that on the right was a large new trophy case. Just east of the trophy case were the stairs to and from the north door of the gym, and some distance beyond that, and with a jog to the right, was the double-door north entrance to the shop room. After the windows on the left was a door to and from the center of the lunchroom. Further east was a stainless-steel window and shelf that was used as the concession stand, this being located a bit east of the bottom of the steps out north from the gym.

The photo below, from the 1965 yearbook, provides a good view from the west end of the hallway looking to the east. On the far right is the right entrance door to the hallway, then the senior photo panels, the trophy case, and the gym steps. The door on the south side of the east (back) wall was the entrance to the kitchen for students getting their lunches. On the left is a coat rack, a bit of the windows to the north, double doors into the lunchroom area, and the concessions window barely visible at the back left. Just inside the door on the left, a short wall is visible, that no one remembers clearly. This is the wall between the boys and the girls in the top right photo on page 5 below.



The 2015 photo below, from days prior to demolition, shows a similar view, perhaps with some elements clearer; but many also changed! The front set of lockers is where the senior photos were originally, and the second set of lockers is in the former trophy case. The concession window is seen more clearly here. The north doorway into the lunchroom has been widened here, now serving as the entrance to the 1968 grade school addition. The former windows out to the playground have been changed to a smaller built-in trophy case.



The concession window is seen more clearly here. The north doorway into the lunchroom has been widened here, now serving as the entrance to the 1968 grade school addition. The former windows out to the playground have been changed to a smaller built-in trophy case.

The photo below is useful only in being a yearbook photo showing the windows on the north wall near the west end of the hallway; it does not shed any light on whether there was a door out to the play area just east or west of those windows.



The photos below show the gym door and steps (left photo, from 1963), trophy case (middle photo, from 1965), and the concession stand window (right photo, from 1963). The concession stand window is fully open here, from the inside of the lunchroom; the girls are sitting in the lunchroom, the boys standing in the hallway leading into the kitchen serving area, and with the double doors into the Shop behind them.



The doorway and landing from the gym into the hallway became a favored location for group photos. Here are class officer photos at this location showing all three of us Toews Brothers; 1963 for Galen (left) and Arrel (middle), 1965 for Myron (right).



The left photo below, from 1967, shows another nice view of the senior photo panels display. The middle photo, from 1968, shows the cooks posing in front of the new trophy case. The right photo, from 1969, shows students with the carbonated drinks dispenser of later years, with the concession stand window to the right.



6.4. The kitchen

Students entered the kitchen to get their food from the door at the east end of the hallway and southwest corner of the kitchen, further south than the lunchroom. Trays were picked up just inside that door, at the south end of the counter, rolls and pizza and some foods were served from the center of the counter, and at the north end of the serving counter were the steam pots for serving hot foods. On the wall at the north end of the serving counter were two milk dispensers. The wall behind the serving counter kept the cooking area from being seen by students getting food. These features are shown fairly well in the photos here, the left photo from 1967 and the right photo from 1963. The right photo shows the large refrigerator and/or freezer and the dough mixer. North of the wall behind the milk dispensers was the dishwasher, with a window opening to the lunchroom for students to return their trays and dirty table service. I presume there would have been a walk-in refrigerator and/or freezer at this time also, but I do not know where it would have been located.



6.5. The lunchroom eating area

As indicated, this was a large room, with a doors on the south wall near the center, a door out to the play area at the north end of the west wall, and tall windows all along the north wall. The photos here show students ready to sit down to eat (left, from 1965) and a parent volunteer for a party in the lunchroom (right, from 1967). The right photo shows the north wall windows, and both photos nicely show the new tables and chairs.



6.6. Changes to the former kitchen, lunchroom, study hall, and library at this time

When the previous kitchen and lunchroom (see Chapter 4) were no longer needed, they took on new uses. What had been the lunchroom now became close to full-time study hall, though it was occasionally pressed into service as a classroom as needed; I remember having Biology there as a classroom, likely my sophomore year, 1966-67. I believe the original tables and chairs continued to be used for at least a few years. What had been the kitchen became the new library, with bookshelves along the back wall; my memory was of one of the former serving windows becoming the window for requesting and checking out books, but photos only show this as an open space with a table or tables in front. What had previously been the library, Room F2 from Chapter 4, now became a dedicated Superintendent's office, with doors from both the north-south hallway and from the "public" office in Room F1. I do not remember whether the former library window into the lunchroom was bricked over or just taken out of service. I also do not remember whether the Principal's desk was in that same F2 office, or perhaps in F1 for some years. The Superintendent's office appears to also have been used for School Board meetings. For sure in later years, the school secretary's desk was the only one in the F1 office, along with the mimeograph machine, mailboxes, and teachers' supplies. Whether all of these changes occurred in 1962, or came along later, is not certain.

The left photo below is from the 1964 yearbook; it could still be the library window into Room F2, or it could be one of the serving windows open to the library shelves in the former kitchen. The right two photos below, from 1969, clearly show open shelves in the library area and tables with free access from the study hall to the north. [As always, clear memories from others are needed and welcome.](#)



The photos below are of the Superintendent's office in what had been the library, Room F2. The left photo is of Superintendent Claude Gist the year of his retirement, 1965; the middle photo is of the School Board meeting, or at least posing, at the Superintendent's desk, from 1967. The right photo is the first yearbook photo of a school secretary, from 1969, in the north (F1) part of the office; it is thus likely that the Principal's desk was in F1 until the 1968-69 school year, the year of the merger of Kremlin and Hillsdale Schools.

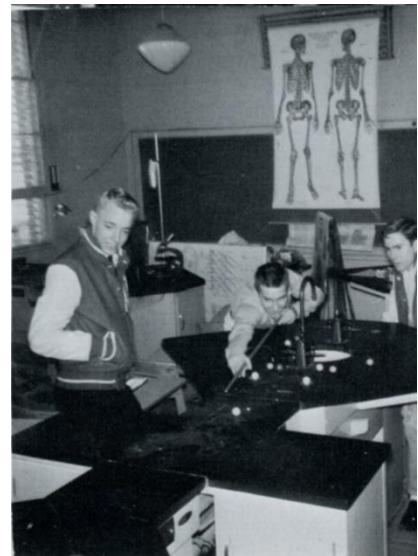


6.7. Additional changes in this time frame

The wooden bus barn directly north of the 6-room red brick school, now the grade school end of the building, was removed and replaced by a new galvanized steel bus barn across the street east from the Columbia school house. The exact year is not known. The wooden bus barn does not show up at the north end of the brick school in yearbook photos starting around 1960 or so, but the first yearbook photo showing the new bus barn in the background is from 1962. However, this photo clearly shows "Sr 59" spray-painted on the side of the new bus barn, suggesting that it was likely there by spring of 1959. These same photos from 1962, below, also show what is now a nice baseball field between the grade school and the bus barn, complete with benches and backstop.



Also in this time period, new lab benches were added to the science room. The left photo below is from Oklahoma Historical Society archives (found by Arrel) and shows Claude Gist, Superintendent, and Merlin Rodgers, Principal and Science teacher, starting to open the crates with the new benches, November, 1961. The middle photo below is from 1962, showing the new lab benches in use for some "wet lab" work. The right photo below is from 1966, by which time more clever and less appropriate uses for the lab benches had been discovered -- unique uses of molecular models atoms as balls and a pointer as the cue stick.



Chapter 7. The football lockers and new shops addition, 1966

Acknowledgements and thanks to those who contributed to this chapter:

Peggy Smith Guthrie Harris, Class of 1962, who not only provided her own memories but passed on memories from her cousins and others, or helped me to connect with them myself

Jim Harris, for his memories as the first football coach in this addition

Dennis Toews, Class of 1965, for his memories

Ellis Toews, Class of 1966, for his memories

Eldon Toews, Class of 1971, for his many emails and memories

Russell Lloyd, Class of 1969, for his memories and fun stories

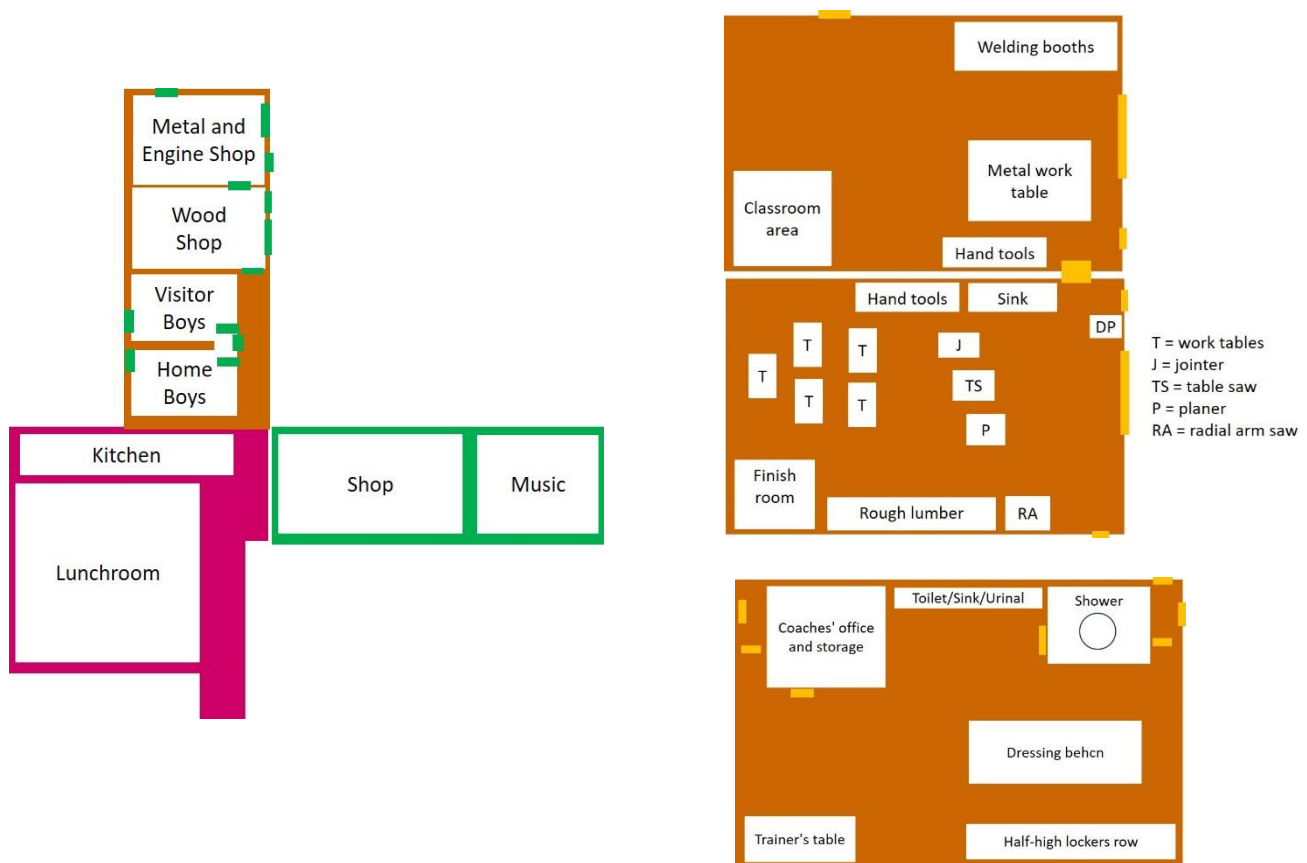
My brother Arrel Toews, Class of 1966, for help with places where my own memory was fuzzy, and for ongoing help with editing and style issues

7.1. Overview of the addition

The next addition was a long metal building extending east from the connecting point of the existing shop and the kitchen/lunchroom and hallway. It included two football locker rooms, one for the home team and one for visitors, and two new shop rooms, one for woodworking and one for metal work and small engines, and a long hallway connecting these new rooms to the rest of the school. There were at least 3 important reasons for this addition. First, 1966 was the first year that Kremlin played football, so of course larger locker rooms were needed, and with direct access to the football field, east of the existing baseball field, so that football cleats would not be worn through the existing hallways. Second, welding and some other metal work had been added to the shop classes a few years earlier; this proved popular and likely more useful to the average Kremlin student than woodworking, which required so many specialized tools. So, a shop facility dedicated to metal work and small engine repair was needed. Third, Kremlin began kindergarten for the first time (since the days of the first white wooden school prior to 1933!), and space for a kindergarten classroom was needed. This new addition helped meet all those needs.

This addition was completed during the 1965-66 school year; several former students clearly remember starting their Shop projects in the room near the music room and kitchen/cafeteria but finishing those projects in the new shop. This includes my own memories from my freshman year Shop 1 class and memories of Arrel and Ellis and others of having part of their senior year Shop 2 class in the previous shop room and then finishing them in the new shop. Whether the move was over the winter break between semesters or sometime later in the spring semester is not a clear memory for any.

The general location of this addition is shown on the left below. Enlarged diagrams of the home boys' locker room and the shops are shown to the right. [Corrections or additional details appreciated, as always!](#)



To the left below is a photo of the bulk of this addition, taken to the south-east from the foyer area between the previous shop and music rooms a few days prior to demolition of all these buildings in 2015. The long blank wall to the left (west) is the hallway, with the football locker rooms to the north of that hallway. The overhead doors and people doors into the two shops are nicely shown here. The right photo below shows another view of the east end of this addition, from the 1968 yearbook.



7.2. Football locker rooms

The hallway was on the south side of this addition, running in front of the locker rooms and to the woodworking shop. The home team boys' locker room was the first room east of the previous buildings, on the north side of the hallway, and the visiting team boys' locker room was the next room to the east. I believe there was a shared entryway into both of these rooms, with a water fountain, [but perhaps there were two separate doors from the hallway](#). I will need a photo or someone else's memory to establish whether there was a shared exit to the north from these two rooms, or whether there were two separate doors on the north side.



Here are the only yearbook photos ([through 1969, more welcome!](#)) inside the boys' locker rooms. The left photo (1967 yearbook) shows the south-west corner double-high open-front lockers; the right photo (1968) shows the visiting boys' locker room, doubling as the wrestling room at this time. This room may have later become a weight training room.



Inside the home team room was a storage room and “office” for the coaches (no photos), at the north end of the east wall. I believe there were some lockers on the south side of the south wall of that storage room. A tower shower with perhaps 6 spigots was next on the east wall, a mostly separate room, with a door on the north side. There was space for drying off between the storage room and the shower room. Covering half to two-thirds of the west wall, starting at the south end, was a row of lockers, I believe stacked two-high. At the north end of the west wall was a trainer’s table for athletes to sit or lie on while getting ankles and knees and other body parts taped or massaged.

This training table and the equipment storage room were my personal areas – I was the manager-trainer for all of the sports teams for my sophomore through senior years. Shop teacher Dwayne Janzen and I built this custom training table; it could be tilted up to various degrees at the head end, was padded and upholstered with red vinyl, and had a shelf underneath for supplies. I set out towels for each practice and game and collected the used towels when done. I took care of getting uniforms ready for the cleaners and then re-distributed for the next practice and games. And I did lots of taping, having taken the “Cramer Student Trainer” correspondence class. It was also my job to get everything onto the bus for away games and to keep many of the records and stats for all sports and to call in game results to the newspaper. I felt very important and was proud of my letter jacket.

I think that the visiting boys’ locker room was largely a mirror image of the home team locker room, though I do not remember whether it had a storeroom and coach’s office or not.

My brother Arrel was the first student trainer for the first year of football, and he is no doubt responsible for me deciding to carry on that role. I was clearly not built to be a football player. First year players remember the football team using the previous boys’ locker room at the north end under the west bleachers for their first season in the fall of 1965. Below are two photos from the 1966 yearbook of Kremlin’s first football team.



The photo to the right, from the 1967 yearbook, shows the football goal post at the south end of the field and the west bleachers. For the first season, fall 1966, there were no bleachers; people parked their cars on both the east and west sides of the field and watched the games from there, usually standing or in lawn chairs and often walking from end to end of the field. By the 1968 season, there were similar bleachers on the east side of the field, likely built in the new metal shop. People walked to the new lunchroom west door to get concessions – popcorn, sodas, hot chocolate, candy bars – and to get to the restrooms in the main north-south hallway west of the gym. In later years, a concession stand was added beneath the west bleachers, and an announcer’s booth was added at the top. West bleachers were the home team, east bleachers for visitors.



7.3. The new wood shop

The door at the east end of the hallway went into the wood shop, just east of the visiting boys' locker room. On the south wall of the shop were a wide roll-up garage door for getting large items in and out, and then a people door to the east of that, just before the entrance to the metal shop further east. The radial arm saw was at the south end on the west wall; then large racks for the various boards used for projects; and then a vented and clean finishing room in the northwest corner. Much of the north end was benches for working on projects. To the south of the benches were the table saw and the jointer, with a planer added after a year or two. On the east wall, north of the entrance to the metal shop, was a wide sink for multiple students to clean up from their shopwork. The cabinet with hand tools was on the east wall and north of the sink. The drill press was located between the garage door and the people door on the south wall.

The photo to the right is the only yearbook photo of this room, up to and including the 1969 yearbook; [more and later photos needed and welcome!](#). The photo shows the hand tool cabinet on the east wall, the jigsaw, the sink, and the door into the metal shop to the east.



7.4. The new metal and engine shop

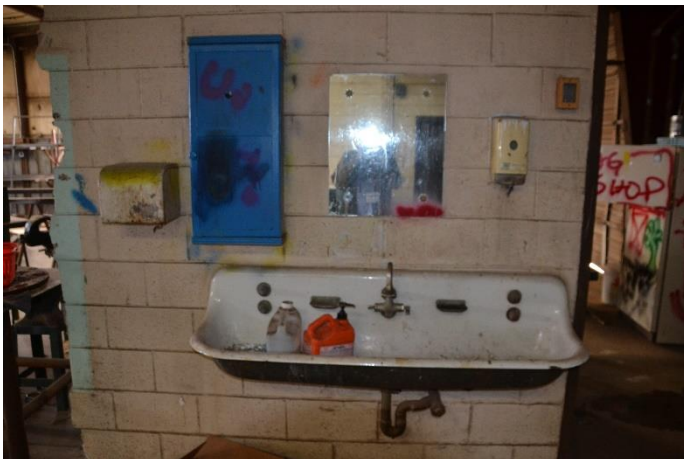
The entry to the metal shop was at the south-east corner of the wood shop, as in the photo to the right, and the metal shop also had both an overhead garage door and a people door on its south wall. Welding booths were at the south end of the east wall; some other metal-work tools and equipment were farther north on the east side. At the south end and near the west wall were one or two large metal tables for working on projects; there may have been one specifically for small engine work and another for cutting and welding projects. I believe that tools hung on the west wall; I do not remember whether there was another sink in the metal shop. On the west side toward the north end was the classroom area, with a blackboard and projector screen on the west wall. This is where I had Drivers' Ed, perhaps mainly because Dwayne Janzen was both the Shop teacher and the Drivers' Ed teacher.

Last modified 09-07-2024

The left photo below, from the 1967 yearbook, shows the welding booths at the back, now with strong canvas curtains, and the metal-work table at the front. A window to the east is apparent to the north of the welding booths. The right photo below, of the football team from 1969, shows a nice view of the east end of the metal shop, with a door and another window. This east exit may have been for convenience, but may perhaps have been a requirement of a second safe exit from the metal shop because of the danger of fire inside. [As always, more photos are welcome, from later yearbooks or other sources.](#)



The photos below are of the remains of the two shops a few days before demolition of this (and all) buildings in 2015. The left photo shows the sink, moved from the previous wood shop to east of the door to the metal shop, with the north end of the east wall apparently having been removed to "open up" the shop. The right photo gives a broad view of the former two shops, now both open with most of the original dividing wall removed, and both areas mainly dedicated to metal shop equipment and projects. The north end of the remains of the original dividing wall, as shown in the left photo, is seen to the right in the right photo.



7.5. Corresponding changes in other parts of the school.

When the new shops were completed, music classes moved from the former music room on the south side of that addition into the former shop room to the north. The piano was usually located near the north entrance doors. The photo to the right shows the men's quartet from 1968 at the piano in the north-west corner of the former shop.



At the same time, the former music room became the new dedicated kindergarten classroom. The first kindergarten class pictures appear in the 1966 yearbook – a large class of 18 students, shown in two groups, but not clearly indicated as morning and afternoon classes, as in some subsequent years. There is also a page of candid photos of students and the classroom, including the photo to the right. In addition to desks or tables, the kindergarten room had stackable cots for the students to take naps, as shown in the lower photo to the right, from the 1967 yearbook. I do not remember whether the kindergarten students found their way through the various hallways to use the playground area north of the school or whether they did not have “recess” with only half-day classes; or perhaps they had some playground equipment of their own to the south of the kindergarten room. They would have had access to the gym and stage through their south door and up the steps and through the door into the south-east corner of the gym.



What had been the boys' locker room previously, at the north end under the west bleachers, now became the janitors' work and storage area. Peggy remembers a fire in this area one year, I believe from a space heater ?? being left on and catching fire during the night; the year is not known, but likely around 1970-75. When the janitors' equipment was moved out of the original stage area between what were then the 3-4 and 7-8 grade classrooms, that area became somewhat of a teachers' lounge, and the place for the mimeograph or xerox machine, paper supplies, and other teaching materials.

7.6. Changes in other parts of the school.

The only other significant change that I noted in yearbook photos from these years is that the basketball goals were replaced with glass backboards rather than the former steel backboards; I believe this is when the stage goal became ceiling mounted rather than stage-mounted. Likely this is also when a new scoreboard was added. The first yearbook photo showing these new backboards, to the right, is from the 1966 yearbook; still old backboards in 1965 yearbook. Eldon Toews credits Superintendent Jack Gordon with all of the many changes in these years, him using newly available oil tax revenues coming into the school budget to bring about all of these major changes during his years as Superintendent.



[Return to chapter list](#)

Chapter 8. New grade school and girls' locker room addition, 1968

Acknowledgements and thanks to those who contributed to this chapter:

Steve Voth, Class of 1973, for memories of the new grade school addition

Janet Voth, Class of 1973, for memories of the new grade school addition and classes in the gym

Terry Thesman, Class of 1973, for memories of the new grade school addition and classes in the gym

Debbie Thesman Wright, Class of 1974, for memories of the new grade school addition and classes in the gym

Pam Voth, Class of 1977, for clear memories of the new grade school addition

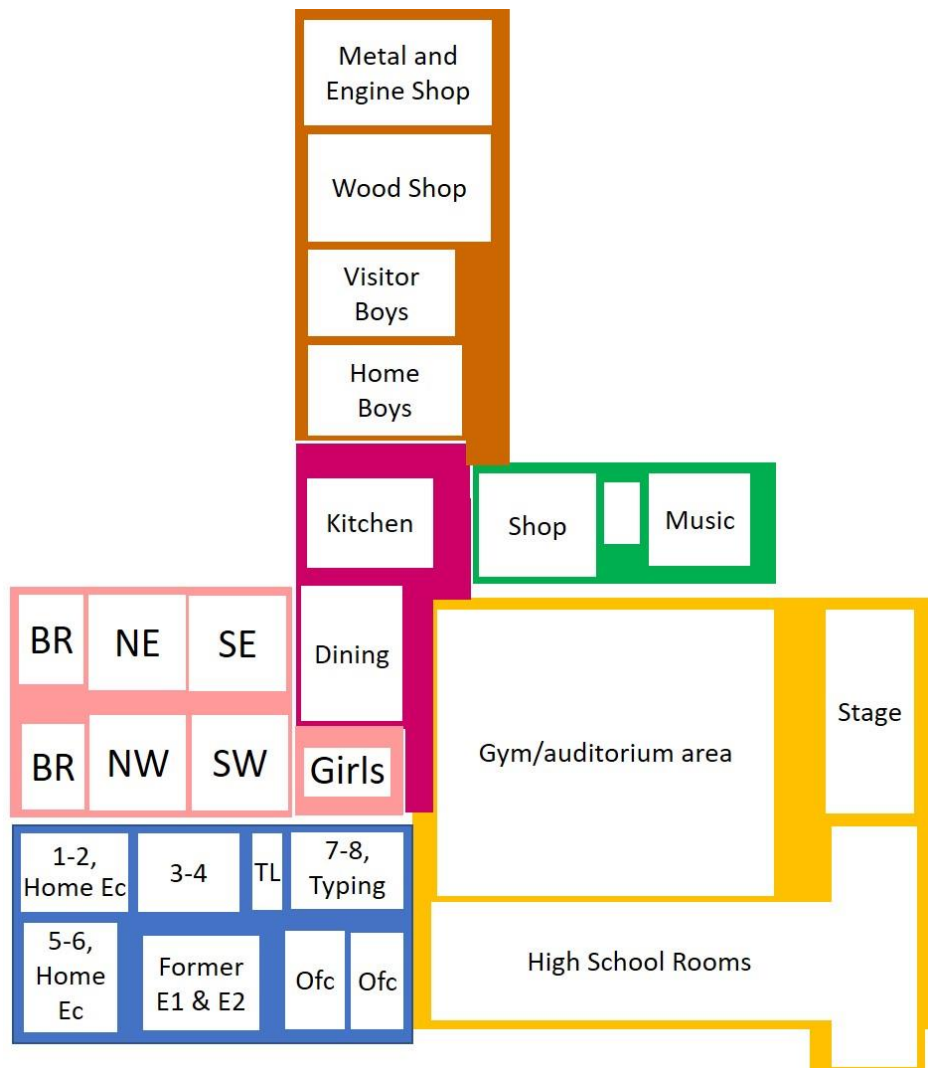
Clark Bittle, Class of 1981, for information on his grade school years

My brother Arrel Toews, Class of 1966, for help with editing and style content suggestions

8.1. Overview of the addition

The final addition to what began as the 6-room red brick schoolhouse complex came during the 1967-68 school year, in preparation for the upcoming merger of the Kremlin and Hillsdale school districts for the 1968-69 school year. Some changes inside the existing buildings were made in preparation for this addition. The new grade school was added along the north side of the new kitchen and lunchroom, running the full length of that building and all the way to the east wall of the 6-room red brick schoolhouse. The yearbook noted that this addition had classrooms with both carpeting and air conditioning, in contrast to the earlier grade school rooms and the rest of the high school classrooms. The remaining rectangular space between the new lunchroom and the 6-room red brick schoolhouse was filled in with a new girls' locker room, located just north of the gym and with convenient access. Much like the story for the 1951 high school and gymnasium addition, there was a good bit of shuffling and perhaps "disorder" for many grades to make this all happen.

A schematic of this addition is shown here. Details have been removed from most of the earlier additions to focus on the new pink addition. "Girls" indicates the girls' locker room. The classrooms are labelled with directional labels, because their uses changed after the first year (1968-69). "BR" indicates bathrooms, *not yet certain which was boys' and which was girls'.*



8.2. Preliminary changes in the existing building in preparation for this addition

To my knowledge, the first change toward this addition was moving the home ec room from the far south end of the 1951 high school into Rooms A and D from the early 6-room red brick schoolhouse, where grades 1-2 and 5-6 had been located previously. New cabinets and appliances seem to have been purchased for this new room. Some who were there remember the cooking part of the new home ec room being in Room A (former 1st-2nd grade room) and the sewing part being in Room D (former 5th-6th grade room). With Home Ec out of its former room, this room became the science classroom to go along with the adjacent science laboratory room. Photos of the new location for Home Ec and its facilities appear in the 1968 yearbook, so this change took place at least by late spring of that year. The photos below seem to show one image still in the old Home Ec room (left, 1968) and one in the new location and with new stove and wood cabinets (right, also 1968); these photos are consistent with the move to the new location having taken place sometime during the school year. I am not certain, but I believe that a new wall and doors may have been put across the north end of the north-south hallway, making a new entry into the newly combined home ec rooms; that wall/door was even with the north wall of what had been Rooms E, so that the north end east-west hallway and north entry door were effectively closed off to all traffic and became part of the new combined home ec area. I presume it was at least at this time, if not sooner, that the divider wall in Room E was removed to make it one large room instead of the two smaller rooms from years prior; if I am correct about the “loss” of the east-west hallway at the north end, there would no longer have been an accessible entrance into the north half of that room, the former E1.



8.3. Building the new addition

Moving Home Ec into the far north two rooms, plus the construction of the new addition to the east of the entire 6-room red brick building, mandated different places for all of grades 1-8 for most of the construction. Many grade school students from those years remember their classes being held in the gymnasium for some part of that year, though none seem to have definitive memories of exactly when that started or when it ended. One thought they started the year in the gym and moved out near the end of the year; another thought they were there only for their last 9 weeks. [More clear strong memories are needed!](#)

It seems that each “classroom” (2 years) faced a different direction. Debbie Thesman Wright was in 5th grade and remembers facing the scoreboard to the north; Donna Voth was in 7th grade and remembers being at the north end and facing the west bleachers.

What was done for normal gym activities during this time? No one remembers having desks moved off of the basketball court during this time. Perhaps grade school classes did not move into the gym until basketball season was over; or perhaps Kremlin arranged to play only away games for that period; but they would still have needed space for practices, so the former possibility seems more likely. [Additional help from any and all on these changes that I was not involved in and do not remember clearly are greatly appreciated!](#)

Eldon Toews had a fairly clear memory that the long-ago cellar and boiler room under the first stage, then the janitor's closet, now the teachers' work room and lounge, was filled in with dirt at this time; otherwise, all access to it would have been blocked off. Peggy thought she remembered several of the boys wheel-barrowing dirt into this space to fill it in, though the specific time frame for that was not clear.

8.4. The new grade school classrooms

Regardless of missing details from this period, grade school students seem to all remember moving into their new grade school area before the end of the 1967-68 school year. There were still 2 grades per classroom for this year, but this was the last year of each grade not having its own classroom space.

Access to the new grade school was through the lunchroom to its south. I believe that the former lunchroom door from the east-west hallway was widened to a double door, likely always open or perhaps without doors. A companion new door was added to the north wall of the lunchroom, which became the entrance to the new grade school. There were four similar- or equal-sized classrooms; Steve Voth remembered Grades 1-2 in the north-east corner room (NE), Grades 3-4 in the north-west corner room (NW), Grades 5-6 in the south-east corner room (SE), and Grades 7-8 in the southwest corner room (SW). [I assume that each classroom had a door near both its north and south ends into the hallway.](#) Bathrooms were at the north end; Pam Voth remembered the boys to the east and girls to the west. Another important memory from Pam was that the two bathrooms were separated from the classrooms by a door or doors that could be locked; this allowed the two bathrooms to be open for those attending football games to use, without them having access to the rest of the school buildings. [I presume there were water fountains in front of one or both of these bathrooms also.](#) However, Pam remembered that there was a sink with access to drinking water in each of the four new classrooms also. There was a door out to the north for access to the playground, and for access to the bathrooms from the football field; the playground was again moved further to the north and east because the new building was where the playground had been previously.

The left photo below is inside one of the new grade school classrooms, from the 1969 yearbook. The newer-style chalk trays below the blackboards confirm that these are the new rooms. The bottom right photo, also from 1969, shows the north door to the new grade school and reveals a few structural features of the outside of the building.



For the 1968-69 school year, the first year of the merger, only Grades 1-4 remained in the new grade school. Clark Bittle's memory is that Grade 1 was in the NE room, Grade 2 in the SE room, Grade 3 in the NW room, and Grade 4 in the SW room. Students in grades 1-4 from Hillsdale rode the bus to the Hillsdale school and then were bussed from there to Kremlin to the rooms in the new "pink" addition, and all of Grades 5-8 from Kremlin rode the bus to Kremlin school and then were bussed to Hillsdale, where "junior high" or "middle school" classes were held in the Hillsdale school building. The students at Hillsdale seem to have used a somewhat "high school" model, with different teachers coming in for each class, rather than having a dedicated teacher for all courses for each grade level. I believe that the gym and ball fields at Hillsdale were used for sports for grades 5-8. Clark Bittle said that he was in 4th-grade in 1981 and his was the first class NOT to be bussed to Hillsdale for 5th grade and on. Teacher Roger Gossen had similar information, that the new grade school started being used in 1981. This would then be the year that the Hillsdale School facilities were closed (temporarily) and all students were at Kremlin. Those buildings re-opened to become the Hillsdale Christian School some years later, and it is still operating today. Clark remembered his 5th- and 6th-grade years being in the new grade school and his 7th- and 8th-grade years being in the high school building. I need to get more information on which grades and classes were where; [or perhaps leave this to others to document!](#)

8.5. The new girls' locker room

The new girls' locker room filled in the remaining unused space, west of the lunchroom, east of the 6-room red brick school, north of the hallway to the lunchroom, and south of the new grade school building. The locker room was on the same higher level as the former Room F (7th-8th grade room, then Typing), accessed by a raised walkway from just east of the door to Room F, now Typing. A steel guardrail kept people from falling off. I was never allowed into that room, though I taped many ankles and knees just in front of the door; so I cannot give any details on what was inside. [I hope/trust that some of my sports girl friends will provide at least some information.](#)

8.6. Many more changes to come!

Not long after this addition, an entire new grade school was added to the north, where the bus barn had been located. This led to many more changes in the buildings and additions I have described here. Eventually another addition was made to that new grade school, a new gymnasium and entry area added to the east. A new bus barn was built just south of the entrance to the metal shop. [I was not around for any of these changes, but Chapter 9 is a start on documenting those. I will need lots of help from others to either write about those buildings and changes or to share their memories and photos with me so that I can write those chapters.](#)

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Chapter 9. Changes after 1969 – Hillsdale years and new grade school buildings

Acknowledgements and thanks to those who contributed to this chapter:

Clark Bittle, Class of 1989, for information on his grade school years

Roger Gossen, teacher for many years, for multiple pieces of important information

Alanna Uhrig Hart, Class of 1985, for one critical piece of information

Gini Zaloudek, for sharing her collection of Kremlin memorabilia from the 2001 Kremlin Centennial celebration with me, which included useful information for this chapter

My brother Arrel Toews, Class of 1966, for help with editing and style content suggestions

9.1. 1969 to 1981

After the grade school addition to the middle of the north side of the school complex, the Chapter 8 “pink” addition, and the merger with Hillsdale, things seem to have remained fairly constant. Grades 1-4 were in that latest grade school addition, and I assume that kindergarten continued in the former music room. Grades 5-8 attended school in the Hillsdale school building(s), and the high school students used the rest of the building. [There may have been changes in the uses of some of the high school rooms – I was not around for these years at all.](#)

The first significant change that I know of was the building of the Stewart swimming pool and a changing room with a concessions room; [I believe this was just south of the bus barn, but it is possible that the bus barn was removed to make room for the swimming pool.](#) Jim and Minnie Stewart lived near the northwest corner of the Kremlin school district, but they did not have any children of their own. Our cousins Ernie, Bob, and Johnny Voth rented and farmed (with help from all three of us Toews boys) the Stewart farms for many years, and they helped take care of the Stewarts. When the Stewarts died, they left their farms to the Voth boys, but they also left a significant donation of funds to the Kremlin School. These are the funds that were used to build the pool, perhaps sufficient on their own, perhaps together with some tax and school budget funds.

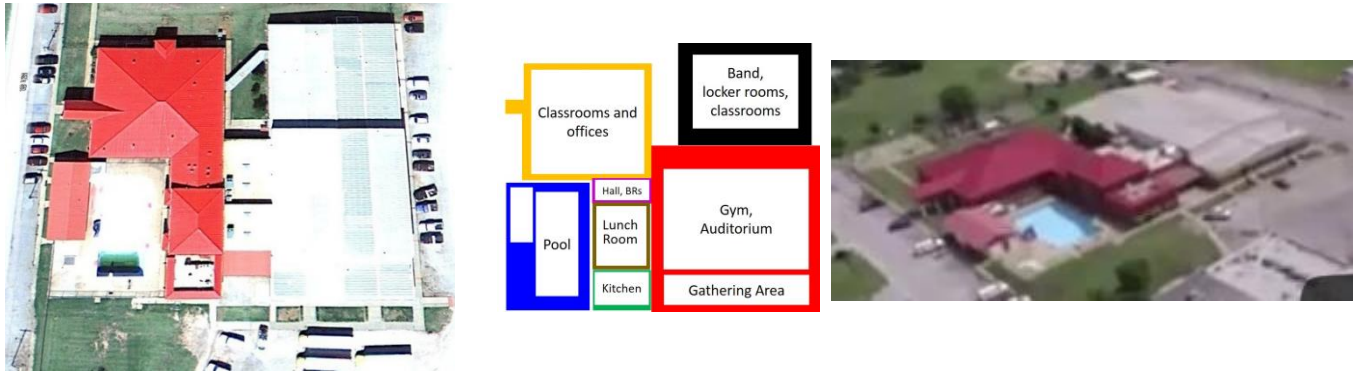
Roger Gossen thinks this pool was built or opened in 1972; he remembers swimming under the “bubble dome cover” in mid-winter, very cold, and with snow on the ground, in February, 1973. That bubble dome, which allowed year-round use, wore out after some years and was not replaced. Roger said that swimming was now (at least recently) done for the first few weeks of PE each school year, before it gets too cold for swimming outside. The pool is now open most days in the summer for the community and recreational swimming, I presume with swimming lessons offered also.

9.2. A new grade school building in 1981, a new gym in 1989, and more

In 1981, an entire new grade school building was added to the north and east of the swimming pool, perhaps in stages. [I was never a part of this building or changes, so I hope that someone else will write about this building, or perhaps help me do that.](#) Teacher Roger Gossen, who started in 1983, and Clark Bittle, who was a 4th grader in 1981, both confirmed 1981 as the date for the new grade school. An Enid News and Eagle article from June 21, 1980, about a storm at Kremlin mentioned that there was some damage at the new elementary school that was under construction, placing construction in the summer (and fall) of 1980. The Hillsdale school buildings were closed down at this time. Alanna Uhrig Hart remembered that the Hillsdale School building closed over Christmas break of 1980, when she was in 8th grade; so all students started attending school in Kremlin as of January 1981. The Hillsdale school buildings would open again later, as the Hillsdale Christian School, which is still in operation today.

Last modified 09-07-2024

The left diagram below is the 2011 Google Earth aerial view. The center diagram below shows the separate parts of the building, color-coded, and identified by Clark Bittle. Blue is the pool area, with changing room in the north-west corner. Yellow is the main grade school, with offices both sides of the entry hallway; purple is a hallway to the lunchroom and where bathrooms are located; brown is the lunchroom; and green is the kitchen. Red is a new gymnasium building, added around 1988 or 1989. Black is the latest addition to this facility, [date unknown](#), with a band room (perhaps vocal music also?), locker rooms, and perhaps an additional classroom or two. [More detail needed and appreciated!](#) The photo to the right is blurry but provides a different view of the school, looking to the north-east; source not documented.



Roger Gossen said that grades 1-6 moved into this new grade school, with grades 7 and 8 moving into the high school building. The 7th graders had a dedicated teacher and classroom the first year, and the 8th graders moved from room to room and teacher to teacher for their first year there. The next year, the 7th graders also switched to the more “high school” model of moving from room to room for different classes.

I believe that the high school students also switched to the lunchroom in the new grade school building when it was completed. Clark said that the former lunchroom was split into two additional classrooms, and that the former kitchen became the teachers’ lounge. [I do not yet know the uses of the two new lunchroom classrooms or of the former grade school rooms \(“pink addition” from the previous chapter\); or of most of the rooms in the 1933 and 1951 building either!](#)

The gymnasium addition had an entry area on the south side, which became the new location for the senior photo panels and a nice gathering area, including for enjoying concessions for sports events. The gymnasium occupied most of the north end of the building, but I vaguely remember a hallway running east-west at the north end of the gym, providing access from the back of the school to the classrooms and offices in the grade school building. I believe that this new gymnasium was used for high school games and performances as well, with the earlier high school gym in the building to the south being used only for practice at this time. The football field continued to be improved, with nicer concession stands and perhaps restroom facilities nearby. A new large bus barn was added to the south of the 1966 metal shop, with spaces for [how many buses](#); [when the bus barn was moved is not known to me](#); likely prior to 1981 and the new grade school building.

9.3. The big picture, 2011

To the right is the expanded 2011 Google Earth photo of the entire school grounds. The new bus barn east of the high school gymnasium can be seen, and many additions and improvements to the ball fields. The building to the north-east is an animal husbandry facility for the FFA program. [There appears to be another new building to the north of the grade school, with an unknown area to the east of it.](#) There are now entrances to the back of the school grounds from both the north and the south allowing busses to drive through.



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Chapter 10. Out with the old, in with a whole new grade school, 2016

Acknowledgements and thanks to those who contributed to this chapter:

Peggy Harris, Class of 1962 and former teacher, for sending me demolition photos

Gini Zaloudek, long-time school supporter, for sending me demolition photos

Chelsea Lloyd Edington, Class of 2003, teacher in 2019, for her tour of the new school

Clark Bittle, Class of 1989, for information on his grade school years

Roger Gossen, teacher for many years, for multiple pieces of important information

My brother Arrel Toews, Class of 1966, for help with editing and style content suggestions

10.1. Changes through the years

Along with the new grade school classrooms in the middle of the north side of the school complex, the Chapter 8 “pink addition”, there were many more changes in room uses in the buildings and additions I have written about in Chapters 2-7. I witnessed only a few. Apparently the first home ec room became a “ladies’ room” based on the sign on the door just prior to demolition. I know that the former first lunchroom, then study hall, eventually became the math classroom. [I have no clue what became of the 1957 shop and music room, or what classes were in other of the high school classrooms.](#) Some of the changes in the earlier school complex that occurred along with the new grade school complex to the north have been described in the chapter on that facility, Chapter 9.

10.2. All good things come to an end

Sometime prior to 2015, it was decided that the buildings and additions I have described needed to be demolished and a new high school built in their place. There was an all-school reunion early in the summer of 2015, with recorded interviews with the earliest school alumni, and with a video tape made of all parts of the original school buildings I have described, to preserve those memories for posterity. Though copies of these two important videos were promised to those who wanted them, no one I have talked to has ever seen them, but [many would in fact love to see them. So, if anyone has a copy or any knowledge of one or both of those video recordings, these would be absolutely priceless for document what I have told in my document, plus much more!](#)

My brother Arrel and I toured the school a few days after that reunion and a few days before demolition began. A few of our photos that have not been included already are shown below. Had we known that the promised photos of the school would not be made available as promised, we would have taken many more photos!

The left photo below is the final view of the 1957 music room and shop addition, with many fewer windows. I believe that the photo to the right is inside one of the 1968 grade school addition rooms, [but I am not certain; it could also be a view of one of the original high school classrooms as renovated.](#)



Two athletic facility photos are shown below. Left photo below shows the west bleachers removed; what that area was used for is not known, but it appears to perhaps be a batting cage. Right photo below shows the weight room; this might be the former visiting boys' locker room, with a north door to the outside, and a new double-wide entry door from the hallway; **but I am not certain.**



The left photo below shows Roger Gossen teaching math in the former lunchroom, then study hall, at the north end of the 1951 addition. The right photo below I believe to be the now combined former Rooms E1 and E2, looking to the north.



10.3. Some demolition photos

This section shows a few photos from during the demolition that were shared with me by Gini Zaloudek and Peggy Harris; thanks to them!

The top left photo below shows the last remains of the west end of the 6-room red brick school, Rooms E and F remaining to the right of the power pole, high school to the right, gymnasium behind. The white wall in the center is the north wall of Room E, extended block off the original north end of the main north-south hallway. To the far left is the north end of the first shop, with its original north entry door, and nicely showing how far it was "recessed" to the south of the north gym wall. The top right photo below shows the remains of the 1951 addition, with all the 6-room red brick school now gone. The sloping floor into the 1962 hallway is visible in the center left, below the raised platform for access to the new girls' locker room from 1968. Bottom left shows the 1951 high school being demolished. Bottom right shows only the far south parts of the building still standing.



The left photo below shows some of the demolition machinery and the last of the rubble piles, with the "new" grade school and gym at the left. Below right is the December 2015 Google Earth aerial photo of the demolished school, with the last of the rubble being removed.



10.4. A few construction photos

I made one trip to Kremlin during the construction year for the new high school building, in August 2015. The top photo shows the new high school site from the street in front of the school, and the middle photo shows the school site from the north and east, with the site preparation crew at work with the backhoe. The bottom photo shows the back of the grade school and gymnasium, in particular the several temporary portable classrooms that were used for high school classes during construction.



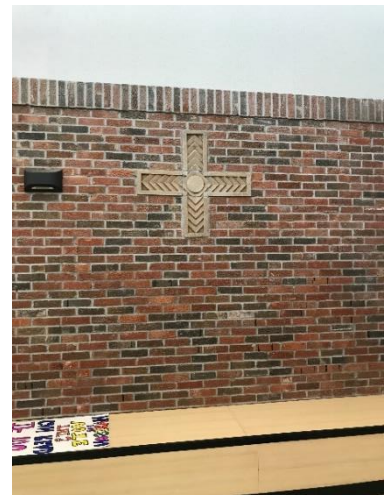
10.5. The new high school

This final section shows a few photos of the new high school, mostly from a tour of the facilities by teacher Chelsea Lloyd Edington for my "Class of 1969" on the occasion of our 50th reunion in 2019. The first two photos below show internet photos of the new school; left is from the architect or builder website, and right is the 2019 Google Earth view.



The photos to the right show the front of the new building and one of the interior walls, highlighting some of the ornamental features from the old 6-room brick school that were retained and built into the new building. Thanks to those involved in this!

There are several additional interesting photos inside the school at [Kremlin PS High School & Middle School \(tri-arch.com\)](http://tri-arch.com), the website for the architectural or construction firm for the building.



Top left below is the entry view from the west, with the high vaulted ceiling, and trophy cases both left and right. Top right photo below shows better view of the north trophy case and the mailboxes. Bottom left photo shows what I believe is the hallway to the south, showing the student lockers and some classroom doors. Bottom right photo shows the decorated ceiling tiles, I believe in the hallway to the north.



Top left photo below is a view from the science lab room into what I believe is the separate science classroom. Top right photo is the computer classroom. Bottom left is the metal shop area. Bottom right is some of the computer-guided laser-cutter woodwork art -- this was the only kind of "woodworking" that I remember seeing, with no memories of large lumber or table saws or woodworking projects like those in our days.



There is a new gymnasium in the new high school building also, left photo here. I believe this is for practices only – note no bleachers – with games played in the gymnasium at the grade school. But also note the small stage. The larger grade school gymnasium with bleachers on both sides is shown in the right photo, at this time set up as an auditorium for a musical performance.



10.6. The END!

The end, for me at least, and thanks to those who followed my stories to the end, if any did. [Again, please note my many pleas for additional photos and memories, as well as any corrections, from any and all!](#)

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