

CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL HISTORICAL TIMELINE 1854-2016

BARRY COMBS, CHS 1950, AND JIM WIGTON, CHS 1966

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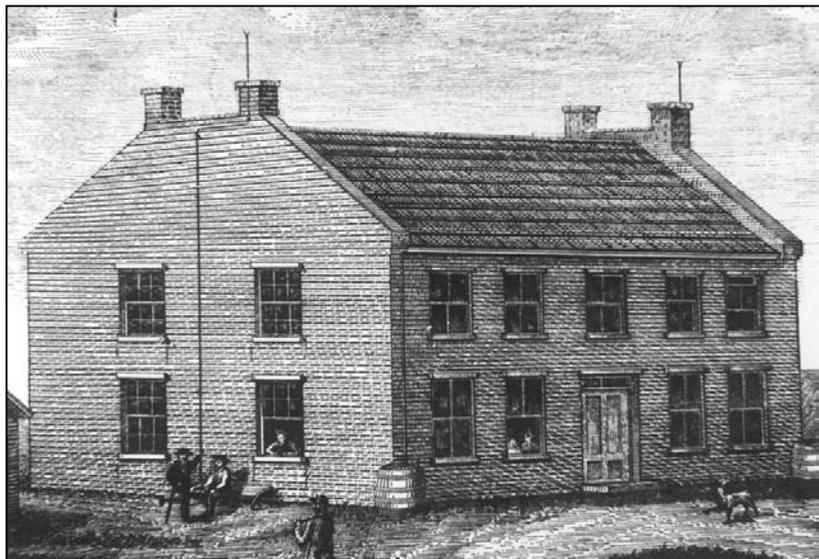
1854

May 23rd, Congress passed Kansas-Nebraska Act admitting Nebraska as a territory. Fourth of July picnic by Council Bluffs settlers on Capitol Hill. Omaha designated territorial capital December 24th. First territorial capitol building begun in August on Ninth Street between Farnam and Douglas. It later housed Omaha's first public school, which was two-story brick, measured 30 x 45 feet.

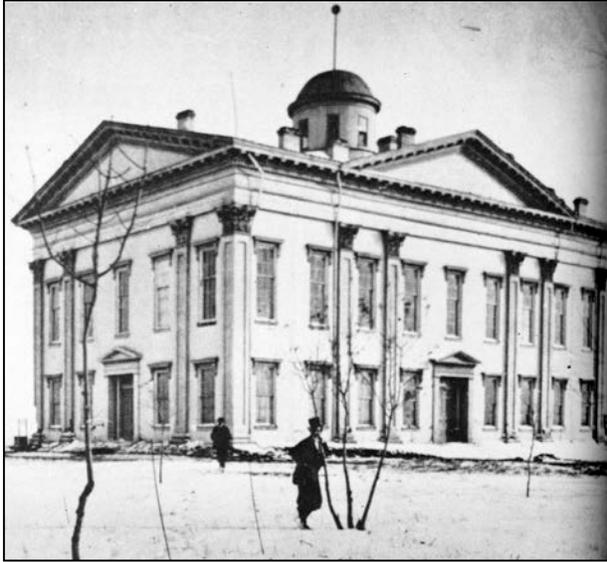
1855

First session of territorial legislature held in Omaha January 16th. It authorized tax of from three to five mills for school districts. This free public school act set up county superintendents who established districts. However, the first school in Omaha was a private or "subscription" school taught in a room of the capitol building by Adelaid Goodwill beginning July 1, 1855. Foundation laid for the second territorial capitol on Capitol Hill.

*First territorial capitol on
9th Street, between
Farnam & Douglas.*



1857-58 Financial panic gripped nation. John Kellom arrived in Omaha, opened bank. It failed. Kellom later became early school superintendent, principal of Omaha High School. New territorial capitol completed in 1858 at a cost of \$130,000. Omaha's population stood at 4,000.



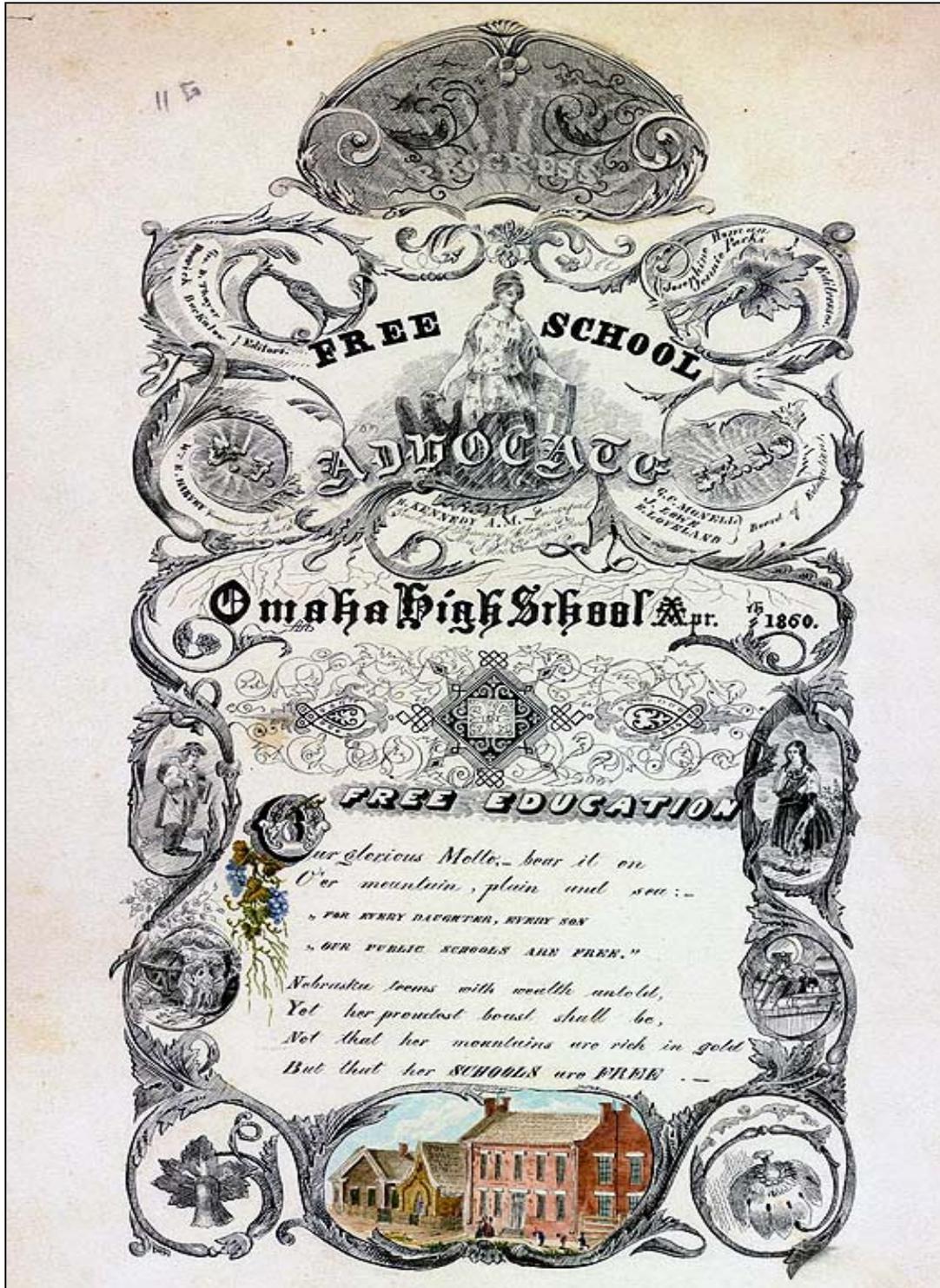
Second territorial capitol located on Capitol Hill, 20th and Dodge streets, site of the present day Central High School.

From the Bostwick-Frohardt Collection, Owned by KM3TV and on permanent loan to The Durham Museum.

1858-59 Graded school system established by legislature. Brownville High School opened in 1858. In 1862 Brownville schools changed to private, then returned to free in 1867. A graded school building, including high school students, built there in 1865. In January, 1859, territorial legislature met at Omaha in new capitol building on the site of present-day Central High School.

1859 November, the school that later became Central first opened in the unused old territorial capitol building on Ninth Street. Howard Kennedy named Omaha public school system superintendent. School was graded, included a high school department. Board of Regents established for school system. Five teachers employed. Four used in the school at the old territorial capitol building, one taught additional primary classes in a small school near 13th and Douglas.

In 1859 both Omaha and Brownville schools initiated first versions of school journalism in the state. Brownville's, called *The Student Enterprise*, was created in their log cabin school. Omaha's, called *The Free School Advocate*, was composed in the school's quarters in former territorial house. Both papers were handwritten, not printed, and read aloud to assembled students; Omaha's at 3 p.m. each Wednesday.



April 15, 1860
issue of the
*Free School
Advocate*.
Earliest
predecessor of
today's
Register.

1860

Omaha's population stood at 1,883.

Public school funds exhausted. Volunteer teachers used. Tuition charged -- from two to three dollars per term; no free public schools existed in Omaha for three years.

1861

Samuel DeWitt Beals arrived in Omaha, refused job public superintendent. Started private school April 22nd in former public school classroom in the north half of the old territorial capitol building. Called Omaha High School but school taught mostly elementary subjects. He continued this for six years.

1862

Beals' school moved to Hamilton house on Douglas between 14th and 15th Streets. Then to First Baptist Church at Douglas between 15th and 16th Streets.

1863

A one-room frame public school house was built at Jefferson Square (16th & Davenport), the first public school building built in Omaha.

Beals moved his private school to 15th and Capitol

1864

January, new public school opened at Jefferson Square with Celeste Parker in charge.

Over next eight years public high school moved through nine different temporary buildings.

1865

Nebraska City high school erected, first high school building in Nebraska.

1867

Nebraska statehood arrived March 1. Legislature declared the capital to be Lincoln June 14th. However the new capitol building in Lincoln was not finished until December, 1868, so state legislature continued to meet in Omaha until then.

1869

Once settled in Lincoln the legislature donated Omaha's Capitol Hill grounds and building to Omaha. It was placed under control of the Board of Regents.

On June 2nd, pioneer Omaha businessman Joseph Barker, Jr. wrote his family in England, "The school regents have had a good architect from Chicago to examine the old capitol and he after breaking into the foundations finds that the center of the thick walls is all loose sand, small stones, brickbats etc -- and that the building is not safe and must be pulled down. They are going to pull it down and use the materials in building a handsome school house that can be extended as the growth of the community may require."

Surveyors from federal Department of the Coast (predecessor of today's National Geodetic Survey) marked Capitol Hill as starting point for measuring longitude in Omaha area. Marker graded under and replaced several times over century and half to accommodate school's rebuilding and expansion. Marker served as a base point for all regional land surveys.

1870

Old capitol building found unsafe, torn down. Construction began on new high school building on present site. Omaha's population stood at 16,000.

1871

High school continued at Jefferson Square under Principal John Kellom, then moved to Jackson Street between 14th and 15th, then (in 1872) to new building on Capitol Hill. First permanent public high school in Omaha. In 1871 there were 3,378 children of school age in Omaha, only 2,496 in school. Omaha consolidated into one school district by state legislature.

1872

In January both board of trustees of school district and the board of high school regents were dissolved and a board of education took control of the district. First superintendent, A. F. Nightengale.



Omaha High School, completed 1872, served both high school and grade school students, featured a 185 foot clock tower and 18 classrooms.

Capitol Hill building was completed in the spring of 1872. Final cost was \$225,000. By comparison high schools built in San Francisco, CA and Worcester, MA at the same time cost \$70,000 and \$170,000 respectively. It was designed by Chicago architect G.R. Randall in the second empire style.

The new building featured 18 rooms and held all grades. According to the annual report of the board of education, high school students were given one large recitation room (seating 75). High school enrollment totaled 47. There were three high school teachers drawing a total of \$2,850 in salary. Subjects taught included Algebra, Geometry, English, Philosophy and Latin. By the end of the year Greek had been added.

The High School, a newspaper dedicated to "Education and the interests of the High School" published its first edition in February. Professor Nightengale, (see above) an early faculty member, had encouraged students to publish an educational journal. Another inspiration was The Hesperian Student, a Lincoln NE, paper. The Omaha publication ceased publication in December, 1881. The paper was owned by a group of students.

1873

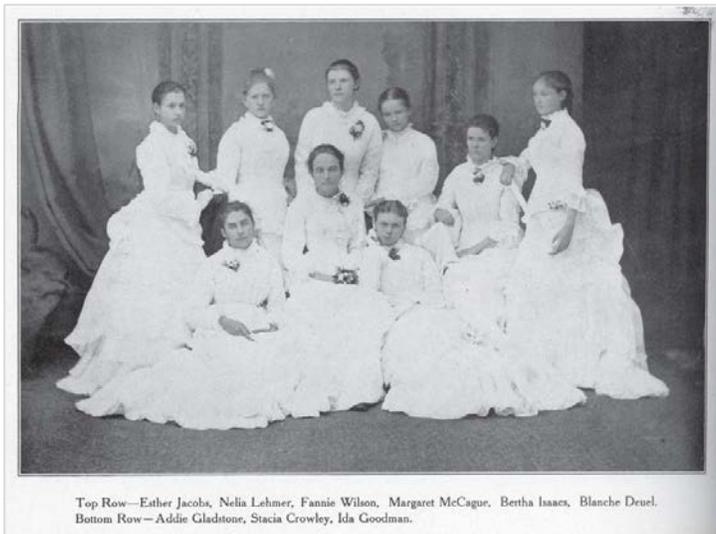
High school enrollment grew to 60.

1875

President U. S. Grant spoke at Omaha High School.
Hawaiian King Kalakaua visited Omaha and OHS.
John Kellom's last year as principal.

1876

First graduation exercise. Eleven students, nine girls, two boys. Only the girls posed for the class photograph.
First demonstration of electric lights in Omaha held at OHS on the Fourth of July.
Dom Pedro II, Emperor of Brazil, visited OHS. W. H. Merritt was principal 1876-77.



First graduating class, minus the boys.

Top Row—Ether Jacobs, Nelia Lehmer, Fannie Wilson, Margaret McCague, Bertha Isaacs, Blanche Deuel.
Bottom Row—Addie Gladstone, Stacia Crowley, Ida Goodman.

1877

C. H. Crawford was principal 1877 to 1881.
Superintendent of Schools S. D. Beals reviewed the new high school's progress, "There is a lack of reference books in literature, history and some departments of science in the high school library. This is a serious hindrance. The laboratory is but moderately well supplied with chemical and philosophical apparatus. Among the instruments that should be immediately furnished is a microscope of medium power." By 1896 the school's science department was so advanced OHS was able to perform pioneering work with newly discovered X-rays (see below).
The Register lost two staff members when they dropped out to start businesses. During this early period of the school about half of those who started high school dropped out before finishing.
In 1874 there were more than 100 pupils of all grades who attended night school held at the high school.

1878

Omaha's population stood at 28,000.

Only four students graduated from high school. All girls. They were Fannie Herron, Sarah Jacobs, Marcia Manning and Willie McCague.

1879 Emphasis placed on more vocational curriculum. Again graduates numbered only four.

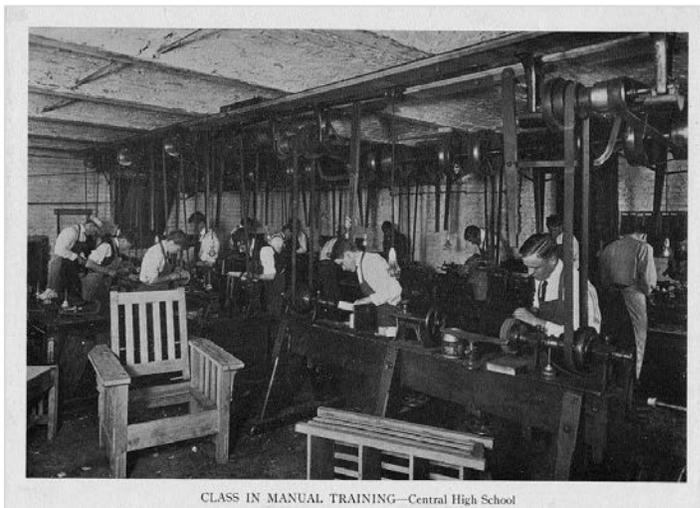
1880 In September President Rutherford B. Hayes visited OHS and climbed the clock tower with his wife.

1881 Charles D. Hine was principal 1881-82.

1883 Homer P. Lewis was principal 1883 to 1896. Omaha had grown to 51,295. High school enrollment stood at 139 students. Faculty comprised of six teachers.

1884 First military club at OHS formed. Thirty members of the class organized the unit under the name, *The Republican Club*. It disbanded two years later. Graduates totaled eight. School board worried about low enrollment, urged increased emphasis on convincing students of the importance of education.

1885 Manual training for both boys and girls introduced. Girls' program focused on domestic science. Department fitted out in basement of high school for \$3,500. There was major local dissension over whether school should



CLASS IN MANUAL TRAINING—Central High School

Circa 1915.

offer technical training subjects or remain strictly classical in its education. Omaha has been called the first city to establish a manual training program as a regular branch of the city school system.

Omaha High School switched from trimesters to semesters. Twenty students graduated; largest number since inception. Total number of rooms in building had increased to 28. Most of them still devoted to the elementary school.

1886 First issue of *The Register* printed December 2nd. Today it is the oldest high school newspaper in continuous publication in the Midlands. *The Register* was founded by students J. Wallace Broatch and Herbert Taylor as a bi-weekly. Victor Rosewater was the first assistant editor. It was four pages, twice a month.

1887 Military Company organized at the high school by J. Wallace Broatch. Arms were borrowed from the *Thurston Rifles*, a unit of the First Nebraska Infantry.

First football team organized.

Cooking course started but was criticized in the *Bee* (newspaper) and shortly thereafter dropped. Cricket, baseball and football played by the students. *The Register* became monthly. High school had grown to 372 students with 20 teachers.

Board of Education issued order transferring the seventh and eighth grades from the high school to other schools in the city due to overcrowding. This was opposed by parents. Between 1887 and 1891, when bonds for Central Grade School passed, there was a long battle about what to do with the grade school students.

First graduating class at South Omaha High School. South Omaha did not become a part of Omaha until 1915.

1888 Military program disbanded as a result of several accidents during sham battle.
Domestic service curriculum introduced.

1889 Omaha High School Alumni Association formed.
First illustration published in *The Register*.

Graduating class totaled 50.



Logo for class of 1889.

1890

Board of Education considered building annex.

In October *The High School Register* printed a letter received from W. F. Herndon, former law partner of Abraham Lincoln. Herndon praised the *Register* as a “fine thing in execution and purpose, mechanical finish and in the true spirit.” The editors were thrilled.

1891

Board of Education voted for construction of a new "central school building." Dr. S. R. Towne filed suit in District Court to compel the lower grades to leave the high school.

President Benjamin Harrison visited the school.

Enrollment was 1,066 including grade school students.

1892

Congressman Samuel D. Mercer had bill passed in Congress to detail an officer from Fort Omaha to Omaha High School to organize and train students in military subjects.

1893

The Board of Education, at the urging of parents, made the cadets voluntary not compulsory. Battalion formed. Drill team and color guard started.

Central Grade School built across Dodge Street from OHS to relieve overcrowding. Girls' participation in manual training program dropped (see 1885).

1894

Omaha High School enrollment approached 1,000. Overcrowding is still a problem.

Cadet Battalion received uniforms. Cadet Officers Corps formed.



Early cadets and their "sponsors". The young women shown here were chosen by certain high ranking cadets to act as honorary "sponsors" for themselves for reasons not entirely clear. The practice disappeared shortly after the turn of the century.

1896

Cadet Battalion Company Z (women's auxiliary) formed so the "girls could learn to drill like the boys."

W.C.T.U. served lunches at high school.

Irwen Leviston principal from 1896 to 1899.

Just four months after Wilhelm Roentgen announced discovery of X-rays in Germany, Omaha High School professors Leviston and Turner conducted the first Omaha medical demonstration of the new science. In a school lab they helped local doctor locate a needle fragment buried in a patient's hand.

1897

First issue of the Register Annual printed. This later became the O-Book.

Le Cercle Français, Mandolin and Guitar clubs formed.

1898

Commercial Department started. VDC club formed by 14 sophomore girls. It became a custom to keep secret the full names of many of the girls' clubs and use only the initials.

Bonds passed for new building.

First annual issue of *The Register* printed--later became O-Book.

Football team played six games. Opponents were Bellevue College, Lincoln High, Tekamah, Council Bluffs and Des Moines twice. Only game lost was one of the Des Moines games and team declared themselves champions. Team picture shows 16 players including one coach.

School enrollment stood at 1,300.



1898
Championship
Football Team

LEHMER. DICKINSON. FREEMAN. CATHROE. ROBERTS. GRIFFITH. CRAWFORD. (coach.)
ENGLEHARD. THURKLES. RASSMUSSEN. TRACY. (Capt.) DAVISON.
MCDIARMID. HUTCHINSON. PRICHARD. THOMAS. SABINE.

1899

Demosthenian Literary Society formed. Architect John McDonald picked to design new high school building for OHS. Photos of old building interiors taken by Dr. H. A. Senter. A. H. Waterhouse principal from 1899 to 1908.

Football team captured Iowa-Nebraska Interscholastic Football League championship.

The January and February issues of The Register reported furnaces in the original high school building couldn't keep the classrooms above 40 degrees on very cold mornings. The furnaces were soon replaced.

National History Society was founded.

1900

The School Board dropped McDonald as architect for the new high school. In 1902, McDonald sued the board over his dismissal.

Initial plans called for 250-foot tower instead of central courtyard. East wing would contain 16 recitation rooms, two large study rooms, a library, science laboratories and a gymnasium.

A local judge barred the school board from spending any money on OHS' new building beyond the \$150,000 originally approved by Omaha voters. School board had hoped to use other funds to make up difference between early estimates and actual costs.

Old building continued to be used as new building built around it; the two buildings being connected with "covered hallways each floor." Present day courtyard partially represents the "footprint" of the old building.

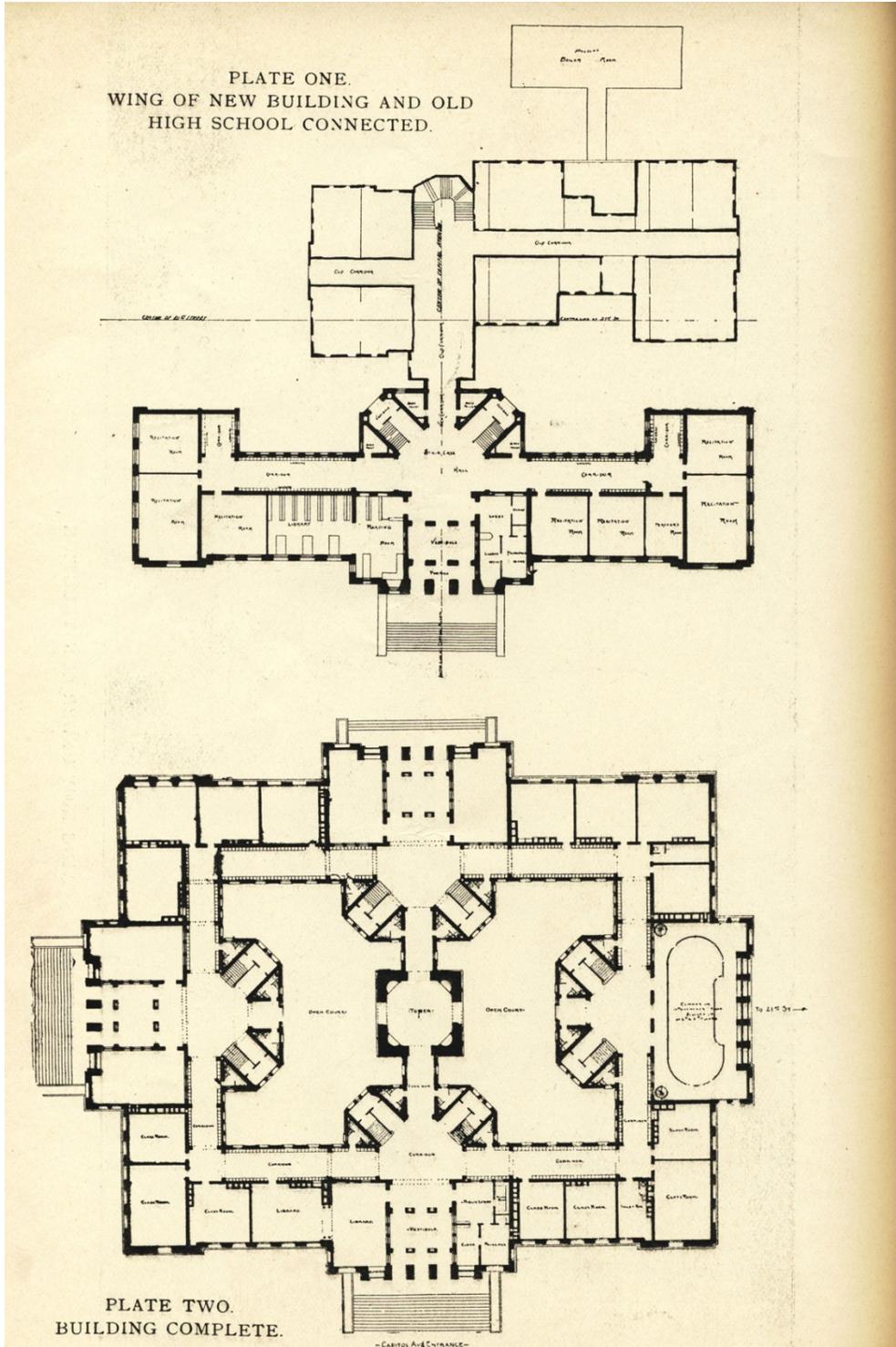
Cadet Battalion stood at five companies and a band. Girls' Company Z continued to drill.

Cornerstone for new building laid November 16, 1900. New architect John Latenser's plans for a French Renaissance Revival style building were approved. Order of construction of the wings was east, south, west and then north.

PLS and Sigma Phi (both literary and social societies), Seniors Club, Cadet Band and English History Club all formed. Stories in *The Register* sometimes referred to the PLS club as "Pretty Little Seniors" but it is more likely the initials stood for "Pleiades Literary Society," a club title that appears in later issues. PLS was made up of senior girls, Sigma Phi of juniors.

High School Register (Sept. issue), wrote new building had been started. "When completed...it will be rectangular with a long open court in the center, out of which will rise a high tower...one of the highest points along the Missouri River...250 feet above the foundation."

Banjo class organized. In March cadets planned to have battalion camp out. In October they were still planning.



The top plate shows how the new east wing connects to the old building.

The bottom plate shows the new building with the proposed tower in the middle of the courtyard.

1901

New building under construction. East wing completed.

Construction halted temporarily.

Girls Literary Society, Hospital Corps, Signal Corps, and Alpha Beta Gamma formed.

The July 2nd issue of the *Omaha Bee* announced Omaha High School was open to all Douglas County students from districts without high schools.

Principal Waterhouse's plan to allow students to progress through their course work as quickly as they were able was approved. Students would be grouped by ability and the groups allowed to progress independently.

From its beginning through the spring of 1901, *The Register* was a private enterprise owned by two senior class students each year, somewhat like sponsorship of dances would be later in the century. School administrators believed the paper should be more widely held by student body and during the school year 1901-1902 the current owners were bought out, partly with a subscription of 15 cents per student, and later with operating revenues. Cost was \$200. To formalize ownership a joint stock company was organized and shares sold to students.

Banjo Club formed with first practice held in room 56 of the old building January 15, 1901. Webster Oratorical Society and Alice Carey Society (ninth grade girls) formed.

OHS Violin Quartet gave first concert Friday, December 19, 1901. Debate team won state championship pennant in February.

By May plans were being completed for a cadet summer camp in Ashland. Visitors would be invited to the camp on Memorial Day and again a sham battle might entertain.

According to the *Register*, Cadets declared "Camp Lee Forby was a complete success."



Logo for class of 1901.

1902

Football team won Iowa-Nebraska title.

The Register discussed the soon to be opened girl's gym on the top floor of the new building. "It covers the entire third [stet] floor, the length is 71½ feet; the width . . . is 60 feet. The roof is high and arched. There is a fine hard wood floor."

Elaine Society (a literary and social club for girls, it was named for the tragic Lady Elaine, wife of Lancelot), and Register Stock Company formed. Also formed during the year were Hawthorne (literary) Society, Lincoln Debating Society and the Browning Society (a social group for freshmen girls).

High School Band (separate from cadets) begun.

Register quotes cadets, "This year we will plant our little city on the banks of Weeping Water." (January 1920) Rather they seemed to have chosen Ames Avenue Park in Omaha. This may have been near present day Carter Lake May 6-10.

First wing of new building dedicated and put into immediate use.



The new east wing and tower of the old building.

From the Bostwick-Frohardt Collection Owned by KM3TV and on permanent loan to The Durham Museum

Natural History Club started.

Architect John McDonald sued Omaha Public Schools. He had been replaced on new building project by John Latenser.

Cigarettes banned at Omaha High School.

1903

Junior Classical League, Webster Society, Pleiades Society (named in honor of the Emerson quote, "Hitch your wagon to a star") and Linninger Travel Club, (named for George Linninger well known local art collector and traveler) were organized. A singing group, The Orpheus Club took shape; it later became The Octet (1906) and The Glee Club (in 1909). Margaret Fuller Society was founded to honor the 19th century author, reporter, feminist and champion of women's education.

Teachers Ellen Rooney and Susan Paxon founded Latin Club.

The senior class donated a reproduction of a frieze depicting the triumphal entry of Alexander into Babylon. This sculpture was made from a mold of the original work by Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen. Sculpted in 1812, Thorvaldsen's neoclassical frieze decorated one of the apartments of the Quirinal Palace in Rome. All this was reported by the *Omaha Excelsior*, Sept. 3, 1904. The frieze copy is still on display in the east hallway of the second floor.

Loquax, an occasional supplement to *The Register* and written in Latin by the Jr. Classical League, began a seven year run.

1904

German Club begun. Thoreau Society first meeting. Latin Society formed "for the purpose of learning something about the Romans besides their language and literature."

Faculty formed an executive committee to oversee *The Register*. Stock value was up to 25 cents a share and the number of stockholders had grown to 705. This was the first year the annual displayed individual photos and histories of graduates.

The three science laboratories in the new building were in use for studies in biology, chemistry and physics.

Manual training students were preparing an exhibit of their handiwork for the St. Louis World's Fair.

Military training came under the direction of regular army captain Frank A. Cook, West Point '85, stationed at Fort Omaha. There were now six companies of cadets plus the band, a signal corps squad, and a hospital corps that came into existence two years earlier to carry off the wounded from the sham battle at the Ashland summer camp. The 1904 summer camp was in Auburn, Neb.

Freshman girls form the Alice Cary Society, a literary club named after the famous writer.

1905

Frances Willard Society formed, named for the suffragist, educator and temperance reformer. Priscilla Alden Society and Ciceronian Debating Society also formed.

The freshman class numbered 520 students. However, only 120 seniors graduated. Basketball team won all their games and claimed the Iowa-Nebraska title.

The German Club, calling itself *Der Deutsche Verein*, submitted its article for the annual in German. Not to be outdone, the Margaret Fuller Society submitted the following original poem to the annual:

Life has other things than text books
And we may seldom judge
A member's temper by her vexed looks
Or her sweetness by her fudge."

1906

Margaret Kennedy became the first female editor of *The Register*. The Senior Class began the Senior Fair to raise money for projects. Previously there had been a "senior contest". They decorated the school, had items for sale, music in the library, and slide shows.

1907

State law passed forbidding high school pupils to be members of a secret fraternity.

Kate McHugh started the Graduate Club for the further study of literature. It included recent grads, some college students and those taking post graduate courses.

1908

Statue of Abraham Lincoln unveiled near southeast corner of high school grounds. Money for statue raised through student donations. The work of Vienna sculptor Franz Zelezny, the sculpture was later moved to Lincoln school at 11th and Center after Dodge Street grading. It now resides at Bancroft School.

Boosters Club formed to promote athletic and debate teams.

Bids taken for south wing.

Art Society begun.

E. U. Graff principal from 1908 to 1911.



The Lincoln statue on SW corner of the building.

From the Bostwick-Frohardt Collection, owned by KM3TV and on permanent Loan to the Durham Museum

1909

Boys' Glee Club and Athenian Debating society formed.

In April the national meeting of the Association of Collegiate Alumni, held in Omaha, led to creation of the College Club at Omaha High School.

Art Society formed.

Demosthenian and Webster debating clubs formed.

German Club was the largest in the school with nearly 200 members.

The Mandolin Club was organized.



East and south wings now complete. The old building stood behind the new structures.

From the Bostwick-Frohardt Collectin, owned by KM3TV and on permanent loan to the Durham Museum.

1910

Sara Vore Taylor commenced teaching.

Dr. H. A. Senter began assembly of first *Register* archives.

Military training reorganized into a regiment with three battalions. Each battalion consisted of three companies.

Manual training department had grown to occupy five "good sized" rooms and 400 students according to the 1910 annual.

Track team won state title. There was some contention from other schools as meet had been delayed by a small pox epidemic and some teams were unable to compete.



Sara Vore Taylor (left), author of the Style Book, Jessie Towne (right), Dean of Girls.

1911

First senior class play performed.

OHS administration discouraged any further Senior Fairs. Their success and growth became too disruptive. The senior class decided to put on a Senior Play, held at the Brandeis Theater, it was a great success.

Student Control program formed and continued through 1919. Reorganized 1922.

President William Howard Taft visited and was believed to have climbed 185-foot tower of old building.

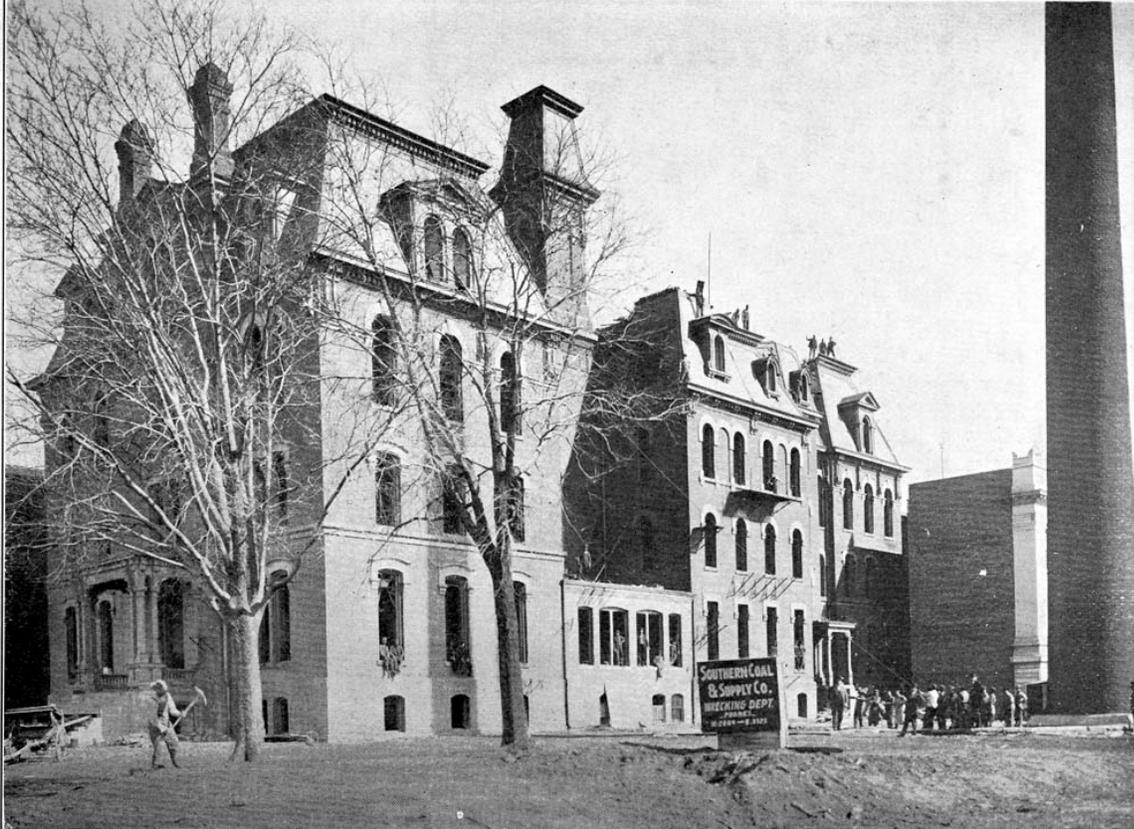
Lincoln Club formed.

Kate A. McHugh principal between 1911 and 1914.



Kate McHugh in her office, then on east side of building.

1911-12 All four wings of new building completed. Total cost \$848,045. Smokestack of old building razed. The old building itself had been razed as the third (west) wing was being built and before the fourth (north) was begun. Before completion of north wing and after removal of old building, classroom space was at a premium. School adopted a "double session" schedule with some classes attending in the morning and others in the afternoon. Enrollment stood at 2,000.



Old school's last days, April 11, 1911. Sign reads: "Southern Coal and Supply Co. Wrecking Dept." Back side of the newly built south wing is visible between smoke stack and old building.

From the Bostwick-Frohardt Collection, owned by KM3TV and on permanent loan to The Durham Museum

1911-13 Name "Central High School" began to be used. Principal McHugh investigated six clubs.

1912 State basketball and track championships won. Gym Club begun.

Omaha High School of Commerce commenced teaching in the building.

Afro-American Alumni Association formed. As of 1912, there had been 43 African American graduates, the first being Henry C. Curry, member of the first graduating class in 1876.

The High School Student Association began to help fund athletic activities.

Dr. H.A. Senter, chemistry instructor and *Register* advisor, finishes collecting past *Registers*. "Someday they will be bound," he noted. They were.

1913 Omaha High School new building formally dedicated.

Commercial High moved to Leavenworth and 17th Street. Later became Tech High. Hi-Y formed. Boosters Club disbanded.

School district held first summer school at Omaha High School.

The Hiking Club formed.

In the Annual of 1913 a writer bemoaned the loss of prominent students to Commercial High, but declared "we are now Central High School."

1914

The Register became weekly, called *The Omaha High School Register*. The Omaha Retailers Association refused to advertise for reasons that are unclear. *The Register*, said Dr. Senter, "has found it possible to finance the paper without advertisements if it is published weekly."

This was the last year the commencement program used the title "Omaha High School."

Boys protested wearing coats during hot weather.

Clayton E. Reed named principal. He served two years.

Student Council and Girl's Glee Club formed.

Track team won state meet.

School began awarding "O's" to debate team.

In addition to the debate team itself, interested students could join one of four school sponsored debating societies.

1915

Legendary English teacher Sara Vore Taylor completed the first version of the *Style Book*. A guide to grammar, a modern version is still in use at Central.

Y-Teens and Student Club formed. Birth of the *Road Show*. Principal Reed suggested students put on a *High School Vaudeville* show to help athletic department overcome limited finances. Raised \$200.

The orchestra, the Choral Union, and the Garden Club all began this school year.

South High School came under the jurisdiction of Omaha Public Schools when Omaha annexed South Omaha.

J. G. Masters named Central principal, served until 1939.

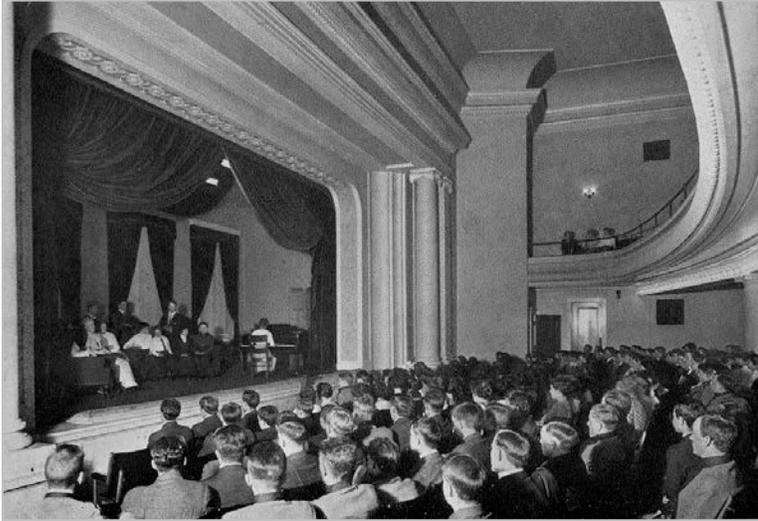
The first year the commencement program used, "Central High School."



J. G. Masters, Principal from 1915-1939 proposed the National Honor Society.

1916

High School Vaudeville show changed its name to *Road Show*, switched financial aid to Cadet Regiment. Funds went to support cadet summer camp and pay for uniforms for students unable to buy them.



*Old Auditorium,
Room 145.*

Girl's Reserve Club (YMCA) founded.

The "Project Method" in education introduced at Central by Miss Geneive Clark.

Student Club formed.

Plan agreed upon to open a branch of the Omaha Public Library at Central.

School board considered mandating uniforms for girl students to counter "low neck dresses, short skirts and generally immodest dress." Also expressed concern over display of wealth in school wear.

1917

Central's enrollment stood at 1,000.

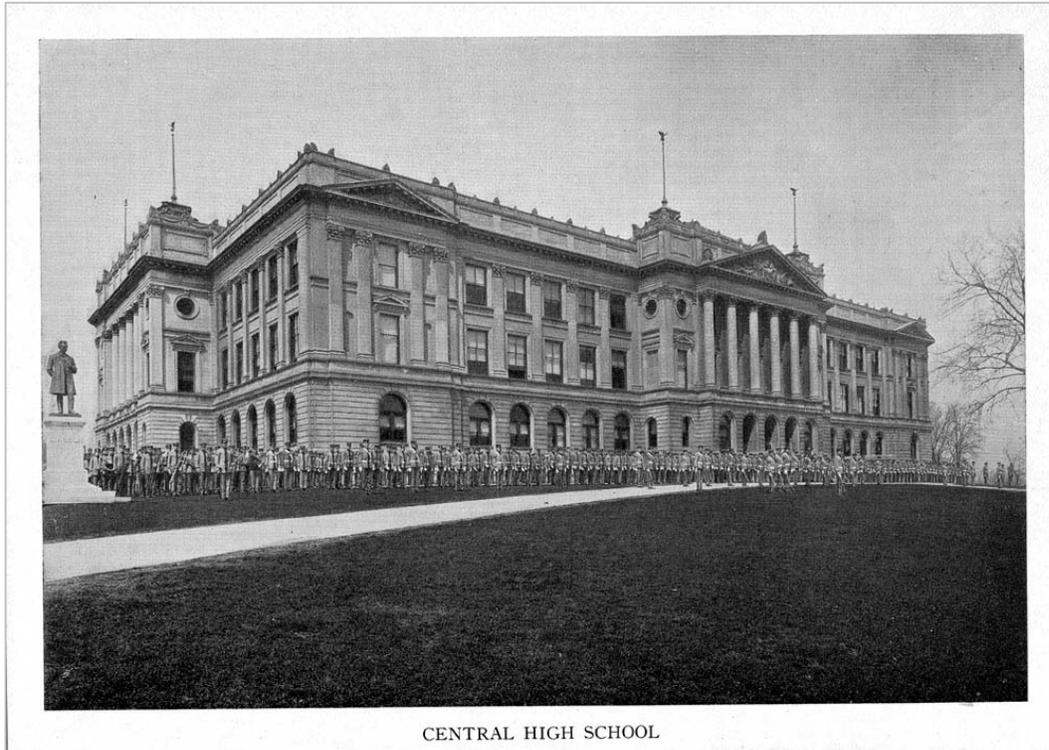
Football team won state championship.

Debate team won district title.

German class enrollment decreased due to World War I public opinion. Military regiment made up of three battalions each containing three companies.

In March Count Ilya Tolstoy, son of Leo, visited Central.

Alumni reunion held for classes from 1881 to 1916.



*Cadets at
Abraham
Lincoln statue.*

1918

This year the annual listed all Centralites serving in the war--more than 700 names by the spring of 1918. Annual recounted war work of students including: raising \$18,000 in Liberty Loans and cash donations, collecting 3.5 tons of clothing for French refugees, hundreds of cards and books sent to troops, 20,500 surgical bandages made by students who also gathered funds to support five French war orphans. Four hundred boys trained to work on farms during summer to relieve men for military service. They were allowed to leave school in May. Some managed a farm near Florence under auspices of Cadet Officers Club.

Classical Association of the Middle West and South held convention in Omaha, brought by the efforts of Central's highly regarded Latin teacher Susan Paxson.

Principal J. G. Masters proposed the idea of a national honor society to the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

WCTU supported school board in student dress concern.

In the autumn a worldwide influenza epidemic caused a school "vacation" from October 4th to November 2nd.

1919

According to the 1919 annual more than "eight hundred alumni, faculty members and twenty-one students" joined the service during World War I. Eighteen died, six in aviation.

The Captain of Plymouth was staged this year as the first "opera" at CHS. Between July 1919 and November 1921, Dodge Street was lowered to produce a gentler grade. Streetcars had a difficult time climbing the 12 per cent grade. The street was lowered some 20 feet on the south side of Central and the school grounds were re-contoured. The fear of the "unsightliness" of the result of the grading was the subject of a January 9, 1920, *World Herald* story. A plan had been floated by some "real estate men and property owners" to add to Central High School and eliminate unsightly approaches caused by the grading. Architects Ellert and Lahr drew up a rendering of CHS (still with the intended courtyard tower in place) surrounded by a lower tier addition. They proposed the new space be used for a junior high or elementary school.



Dodge St. grading (note steam shovel). View looks east on Dodge St. from just west of 20th St.

From the Bostwick-Frohardt Collection, Owned by KM3TV and on permanent loan to The Durham Museum

1920

Re-contouring the school grounds also required temporary removal of the Abraham Lincoln statue. The sculpture had met with mixed criticism from the start. Many found it ugly including longtime Central science professor Dr. H. A. Senter. A product of the University of Heidelberg, Senter was not shy in his opinion when asked by a local reporter if he was "personally sorry to see the statue gone," He replied, "I will be personally sorry if it ever comes back." See 1908.

Bronze tablet honoring students who died in World War installed. Twenty-three names. Inside west doors.

Central students did not enthusiastically accept the renaming of Omaha High School and continued to use the old name whenever possible. The annual for 1920 was titled with the old school name, Omaha High School.

1921

In March, The National Honor Society was established.

Sarah Vore Taylor's *Style Book* was copyrighted.

Speakers Bureau and German Club started.

Student Club split into Freshman Student Club and Student Club.

Overall school enrollment stood at "about 2,500 students."

WCTU organized a cafeteria for the school. Central's Parent Teacher Association organized.

CHS PTA was founded.

As reported in the *Bee News*, "a prom poster shocks Professors." The sponsoring students admitted that the poster was a little "jazzy" or "peppy."

Seventeen-year-old student Donald Rockwell produced a radio broadcasting demonstration, complete with transmitter and receiver, at Central's open house the evening of October 25.

1922

State track championship won.

Spanish Club and Big Sisters organized.

New building on Cuming Street opened for Technical High School.

Central's annual renamed *O-Book*.

Engineering Society formed.

Selection of *The Register* staff was to be by faculty rather than previous election by subscribers.

Military regiment stood at two battalions with a total of six companies. It was called the Cadet Officers Corps.

First annual social directory published.

Local preachers complained of bare feet and flimsy costumes at *Road Show*.

Student Association elected its first female president. Central's enrollment peaked at 2,662.

On April 1 *Omaha World Herald* reported, "Members of the welfare board attended a dance of Central High School students but took no action. "I saw numerous couples dancing cheek to cheek and dancing too close," said Wallace Wilson, welfare board superintendent, "but in a crowd like that, with many of them 18 years old or less and apparently not skilled dancers, positions probably were due to not knowing how to dance on a public floor rather than a desire to disobey regulations."

1923

French, Math, Bachelors, Pep and Engineering Clubs

formed.

Junior Honor Society begun.

Henry Fonda graduated.

Greenwich Village club started.

Girl's Athletic Association, Girl's O-Club and Girl's Student Club all formed.

Rufnex (athletics boosters) later encouraged Big Sister movement. Big Sisters had a senior girl help introduce a freshman girl to school life.

Keen Key Klickers (typing students) formed.

Senōr Reynas' Spanish Club formed.

Central's own radio station, KFCZ, awarded license. This was three years after the first commercial broadcast in the nation in 1920. In 1925 Central changed call letters to KOCH (Know Omaha Central High). Remote lines connected station to Rialto Theater and Schmoller and Muller music store. Programs transmitted to Central for broadcast. KOCH was discontinued in 1928 after problems with faculty supervisor who was fired. (The first radio message was received in Omaha in 1905; the first radio station was WAAW in 1922, and the first commercial station was WOAW in 1923. This last was changed in 1926 to WOW.)

Swim team won all-city title.

School's athletic teams were called, "The Purple."

1924

Girl's Band and Titians (service and social club for red-

haired girls) formed.

The *O-Book* printed a discussion of how "old clubs" (social, literary and debating societies) began dying out after 1919. The new emphasis would be on clubs representing various subjects such as Spanish, Mathematics, and Engineering. KOCH broadcast its first program March 28, 1924.

Track team won state championship.

The *O-Book* for 1924 devoted several pages to school's academics with essays on each of the departments. Of particular note was the continuing emphasis placed on the classics. The language department was divided into two sections: ancient and modern. Nine teachers taught Latin and Greek. Eight taught modern. The English department listed 24 instructors. *Purple and White Handbook* (a guide for new students) first published.

English teacher Sara Vore Taylor began a class in advanced English composition. According to the annual the "purpose of the class is to develop self-expression and self-criticism among students who have exceptional ability in writing."

1925

Student was injured during hazing. School board pondered fate of private clubs.

Central Colleens, Radio Club, and Purple Legion formed. "Color Day" initiated--a day on which every student was asked to wear purple and white -- usually the day before a big game. Some years rallies and bonfires held on west side of school. Other times rallies held at Rialto Theater (today known as The Rose) followed by a parade through downtown.

Jessie Towne suggested a new fellowship and service club, the Central Colleens.

1926

Quill and Scroll, international high school journalism society, founded. On April 26, 1926, *The Register* was one of first 12 high school newspapers receiving charters from Quill and Scroll.

The Eagle nickname adopted. Before that the teams were known as "The Purple" or "Hilltoppers."

Central High Players began.

School won State Interscholastic Academic contest for fourth straight year.

Enrollment approximately 2,000.

KOCH broadcasting power upped to 250 watts. Reports from listeners received from as far away as both coasts, Canada and Mexico.

School board began plan to build a new high school in Benson to relieve congestion at other schools. Central's enrollment totaled 1,741, South 1,517, North 835 and Tech stood at 3,150.

1927

Stamp and Coin Club and Gentleman's French Club formed. Math Society launched.

Efforts to build new auditorium at first met with no success. In 1928 the school board reconsidered and in 1930 approved plans for new auditorium, gym and "natorium" (swimming pool).

1928

Girls' French Club started.

J. G. Masters proposed operating a two-year junior college program at Central High School.

1929

Golf team won state championship. Natural Science Roundtable formed.

1930

Golf team won again.

Debate team won Midland College (Fremont) tournament over 23 other schools. Forty-six students nominated to National Honor Society.



French Club, 1928. There was a separate club for the boys.

Colleens (girls club) had become the most popular in school; four yearbook photos were required to show them all. Dog Fanciers club formed. School board voted to fund much-needed gym and auditorium, ground broken in October. It was also proposed Central obtain Rialto Theater stage organ for \$1,000, but there is no record of installation. The new auditorium was planned to seat 1,730 and feature a sub basement pool of 25'x75' to be completed at some future date. Walls of auditorium made from panels of new composite building material which used corncobs as principle ingredient. Unused excavation for swimming pool at first converted to rifle range, later became band room. Pool never built.

1931

The Omaha World-Herald revealed there were 22 social clubs at Central with 500 members. A Cappella Choir founded. Music teacher Miss Pitts followed tradition of St. Olaf College, at the time considered the most copied college choir in nation. Former Principal Kate McHugh died.

Girls' athletics included baseball, golf, tennis, field hockey and swimming. Cheerleading squad was all male.



*Cheerleaders,
circa 1926.*

1932 Operetta *The Mikado* inaugurated new auditorium on December 16, 1932.



From the Bostwick-Frohardt-Collection, Owned by KM3TV and on Permanent Load to the Durham-Museum

Inter-Club News first edition published. New gym first used by basketball team for practice on January 4, 1932. First game was with Council Bluffs A. L. on January 12.

The Cadet Officers Corps continued to call the regiment "Omaha High School Regiment." Summer camp still partly underwritten by *Road Show*. Rifle Range opened.

There were now two French clubs, Le Cercle Français for girls and the Gentlemen's French Club for the boys.

National Honor Society marked its twelfth year. Fifty-four seniors were named, the largest ever before elected at Central. A ceremony was held in the new auditorium.

Debate team won Midland trophy.

Girls added basketball to their sports.

The Discussion Club Started.

1933

A Cappella choir had grown to more than 120 members.

Girls' sports added riflery and archery. Senior clubs included The Central Committee which, among other things, "furnished ink for all study halls."

Language newsletters now included *El Herald* (Spanish) and *Loquax* (Latin).

The school board, for the first time, allowed high school students in Omaha to hold dances in the school gyms.

1934

Girls' gym instructor, Mrs. G. G. Meier, began program of "sports classes" rather than regular gym classes. These classes created girls teams such as golf, volleyball and basketball.

1935

Cadet program conversion to ROTC (school and government sponsored) was discussed. It had been a private regiment. Change finally took place in 1937. Under new program cadets could receive college credit and cadets and parents would not have to pay for uniforms with ROTC sponsorship. Arguments against change were mainly loss of local control and tradition. Proceeds from the *Road Show* were no longer adequate to cover even show's expenses.

The Motor Club, under the sponsorship of AAA was founded.

1936

Golf team won state championship.

Central High Press Club founded.

Economic depression led to cut backs in staff -- particularly groundskeepers. Central student, and later popular English teacher, Ed Clark recalled the creation of "Dandelion Day" to meet the problem. On a certain day in spring students would be turned out to dig weeds on the school's spacious lawns. The day prior, Clark said, they would be reminded that tomorrow "be sure to bring a knife to school." Dorothy Love Roberson '34, recalled that the product of the students' work was taken to the school kitchen, washed and served at lunch instead of the normal serving of spinach.

1937

School Board ruled, "pupils of any public high school should not be members of any self-perpetuating social or secret club, fraternity or sorority which shall be made up wholly or in part of high school students."

Zora Shields retired. In 1915 she had created Nebraska's first school library at Central.

The Roller Skating Club, which used the West Farnam Skating Rink, began this year.

The French Club affiliated with the Alliance Francais of Omaha as a junior branch. During the Great Depression students were sometimes allowed to stay in school an extra year, if desired, due to the lack of jobs.

1938

Chess Club established.

Future Teachers of America formed. Mrs. Lydia McCague, well-known art teacher, retired.

1939

Principal Joseph G. Masters and English and Latin teacher Jessie Towne retired. Fred Hill named principal and served until 1944.

Central won state championship in both baseball and wrestling.

The Student Council, Bicycle Club, and the Camera Club all began to meet.

World Herald photographer John Savage photographed Central students running down halls to sign up for next semester classes. This method of choosing favorite subjects and teachers was popular during the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. It was replaced with selection made by staff, a possibly more appropriate if less colorful, method.



From the Savage Collection, Owned by KMTV and on Permanent Loan to The Durham Museum

1940 School board voted to take over operation of a semiprivate adult night school, operated for nearly 15 years by Central Mechanical Arts teacher O. J. Franklin, and consolidate it with other school district adult night training at Tech High.
Central won state wrestling championship again.
Sara Vore Taylor retired.

1941 Community group called for a new Southwest High School south of Leavenworth and west of 42nd Street. School board bought 45th and Center St. site for \$4,000. “The board’s action doesn’t necessarily mean that a new high school will be erected on the site,” said Superintendent Hobart Corning. Approximately 20 years later Norris Junior High was built on the site.
Central won state wrestling championship again.

1942 Youth and Democracy Rally held with alum Malcolm Baldrige '12. University of Nebraska Agriculture College faculty taught a six-week training course for 200 boys to prepare them to do summer farm work to fill in for men in service. Fifty were placed.
Custodians struck.
Wrestling team won again. Wrestler Joe Scarpello won the AAU National Championship. A three-time state champion, Scarpello was never taken down in a high school match.

1943

Pan-American Club started.

Road Show program listed 23 areas in which students volunteered help for war effort. Included were making kits for soldiers, food for USO Canteens, bandages, afghans, scrap books. The art department made Christmas cards, menu covers and ashtrays for armed services; homemaking made bed jackets and utility bags; student council and the French Club collected scrap; the Colleens collected books, games and magazines for GIs. The sale of war stamps and bonds brought school wide competitions.

1944

J. Arthur Nelson became principal and served until 1968.

The Register wrote, "The liberty bell was lugged up from Brandeis last Friday." The bell became a fixture of the east lobby for at least 20 years. Outside doors needed dismantling to bring the bell inside.

Winged Victory of Samothrace, full size copy of classic statue, broken.
Wrestling team won state championship.



The Liberty Bell twenty years later.

1945

Track team and wrestling teams both won state championships. Discussions continued regarding building Southwest High School and eliminating Central.

1946 Crackdown on secret clubs. Sixteen Benson girls suspended for membership in Spinsters.

1947 State title again went to wrestling team.
Levi Club formed, headed by music teacher Irene Jensen for those who, in her words, were addicted to "Levi Jeans."

1948 Pedestrian underpass completed beneath Dodge Street at 22nd. It was designed to improve safety for both Central Grade School and Central High School students.
Military organizations stood at four regular companies, three freshmen companies and the band--all constituting a battalion and a regiment. A Cappella choir membership numbered more than 100.
Colleens club numbered more than 300 girls.
Cheerleaders were co-educational.

1949 Wrestlers won state again.
Cheerleaders had become all girls.
Football team had their best season in four years. Two wins, one tie and only four losses.

1950 And again the wrestling teams were state champs. This was the ninth championship in 12 years.
Football team lost every game even though World Herald called loss to Abraham Lincoln a "moral victory."
Extensive renovations including painting, sanding floors, electrical and plumbing updates completed. Principal J. Arthur Nelson repeatedly requested additional athletic facilities. The school still had no football field.
After the operetta in December, members of Creighton's St. Martin de Porres club passed out handbills protesting Central's discriminatory policies in casting and staging productions. Central faculty committee decided these practices would end.

1951

Science Fiction Club begun. Golf team was state champion.

Register announced the end of running for classes starting with the fall semester. Students would submit tentative schedules ahead of time, receive confirmation and begin class the first day of the semester instead of running and thus save a day.

1952

Outdoorsmen's Club begun.

1953

Road Knights, a club dedicated to automobile safety, mechanics and customizing, founded.

Omaha artists Leonard Thiesen and Bill Hammond painted backdrop for the Central stage to be used for Tuesday Musical events.

Latin Club picture in annual shows 92 members.

Music teacher Irene Jensen died. She had founded the All Girls' Party in the 1930s and the Titians in 1924.

1954

Escorts (club) organized. Their aim was to encourage courtesy, civility and act as greeters.

Wrestling and tennis teams both won state championships.

1955

Wrestlers won again.

School system building analysis recommended ultimately changing the location of Central to the west. Superintendent Harry Burke said Central was 'standing in the way of progress.'

Toppers (boys pep club) begun. Homemaking Club founded.

Omaha School superintendent H.A. Burke assured Nelson, "No doubt Central will be around for a long time."

1956

The Omaha Plan, a citywide proposal for recommended and needed infrastructure improvements and an extensive cultural center was put before the public. It proposed turning Central into a museum and carried with it a hefty price tag.

Future Nurses Club founded.

Central was among first in nation to offer advanced placement classes. It was also one of the first to offer Russian language classes.
Golf team won state championship.

1957 *Newsweek* named Central to 38 top high schools in the nation.

1958 Omaha Plan defeated.
School's track team won state championship.

1959 100th year anniversary.
Russian Club formed.
Eighteen girls prohibited from extracurricular activities because they belonged to Spinsters.



Principal J. Arthur Nelson and Vice Principal J.J. Planteen at Centennial Celebration.

1960

Football team captured state championship.



The "C"

1961

Track team again won state.

Junior Hi-Y founded.

Gale Sayers set state and national record for broad jump of 24' 10.5". The state record stood until 2005.



*Gayle Sayers '61 (left)
and Vernon Breakfield
'61 (right).*

Reprinted with permission from The Omaha World Herald

1962 Madrigals, close harmony singing group, created. Speakers Bureau started.

1963 J.E.T.S (Junior Engineering & Technical Society) formed. International Relations Club begun. First annual Homecoming celebrated November 2. Crowned a King and Queen. Last All Girls' Party and last Miss Central. *O-Book* began using some color printing. Debate extended a three-year winning streak to a total of 60 trophies. Coached by teacher Donna Miller, class of 1950. Latin Club had changed name to Junior Classical League and numbered more than 200. Math Club stood at 97 members. Identified in a *Register* story as "movie star and popular lecturer," Ronald Reagan spoke to a student convocation as part of a series on principles of the U.S. constitution.

1964 University of Chicago named Central as one of top 12 high schools in the nation. Duane Perry, head of the math department and much-loved CHS teacher, retires.

1965 Track and cross country teams won state championships. Ski Club, Stamp and Coin Club formed. Future Physicians founded.

1966 Track team won state again. Bobby Allen '66 set state-record mile. Chess and debate teams also took state. C-Squad (described by an ex-member as an "irreverent yell squad") started. Entrepreneurs group begun.

1967 County Commissioner George Buglewicz suggested Central move and its site be used for something else. Octagon Club founded. It was sponsored by the local Optimists' Club and dedicated to promoting understanding and communication between races. Tennis team won state championship. Repeated the next two years. Chess team was state champs.

Civil rights disturbances in December 1967, January and February of the next year interrupted school activities.

1968

Eaglettes formed. Mu Alpha Theta (math honorary) formed. *Dimension*, a publication to showcase student creative writing, began as a feature of *The Register* and later became a separate periodical. Principal J. Arthur Nelson retired. G. E. "Doc" Moller named principal. Moller served until 1995. Thirteen complaints regarding racial discrimination were presented to Principal Moller by 28 parents of black students. Domestic Relations and Political Relations clubs formed. Tennis team won state.

1969

Eugene O'Neil's play *Emperor Jones* was removed as required reading.
DECA founded.
KIOS-FM (Omaha Public Schools station) began broadcasting with studios at Central.
Afro-American History course started. Coeducational staff room opened. Tennis team won state.
Omaha World-Herald noted Central received a "new lease on life" with replacement of plumbing, \$50,000 in new cafeteria, \$60,000 to create KIOS station and tower, roof repair, stairs capped with aluminum.
For the first time in its history, Central did not have the district's highest percentage of graduates enrolling in College. Burke did.

1970

"Liberty Bell" retired from east lobby. A full-sized replica, it had been created by Brandeis department store for window display and later donated to the school. It became a gathering place and lasted 26 years. The bell was replaced by a multilevel carpeted platform called "The Cube" and designed by Central student Alex Toye. Lasted until major renovations in the 80s. Toye went on to become an architect practicing in Kansas City.
Ban on slacks for girls lifted.
Computer Club started.
Chorale, a singing group, performed concert arrangements of folk songs.
Central won state mathematical championship for 11th time in 13 years.
The school board visitation report studies Central's future.

1970-6 Metal lockers replaced wooden lockers. Problem: too many fires.

1971-2 Central's PTA becomes PTSA (Parent-Teacher-Student Association).

1971 First Black History Week at Central. Wantu Wazuri, newly formed African-American group, performed *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Later (1980) Wantu Wazuri grew to have both a club and choral division. Go-In-Betweens (student peer counselors) formed. Arsonists set several fires in old wooden lockers and bomb threats were called in. Wooden lockers replaced with steel.

1972 Girl's track team won state championship. School also captured state cross country trophy.

1973 Future Central Committee (FCC), a PTSA subcommittee, organized to study recommendations of North Central Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges. FCC worked with Doc Moller to press school board to bring Central's facilities up to those of newer schools. *Omaha World-Herald* supports effort. Courtesy Patrol and Central High Singers formed. Future Farmers group begun.

1974 Both boys' and girls' track teams were state champs as were the chess and boys' basketball teams. Special Boys' Education program started at Central. KIOS moved to Tech High building. Chess team third in the nation. The Math Team's 10th straight year for state championship.

1975 Debate squad ranked third in nation. Boys' basketball team ranked first in state. Automatic fire doors ordered by fire marshal. Cost \$280,000. C Club started.

1976

Debate team won state championship.

Olympic champion Jesse Owens addressed a school assembly on April 22. Owens spent much of his time in retirement working with high school students.

1977

School superintendent

Owen Knutzen envisioned a campus setting for Central and Joslyn Art Museum. Both 22nd and 24th streets would be closed and the two institutions surrounded with a park-like setting including tennis courts and a running track for use by Central and the public. Additional parking would be made possible by rerouting 24th Street. Lands would be swapped between OPS, Joslyn and Creighton.

Chemistry storeroom fire. No injuries.

Minority Scholars group formed.

September groundbreaking for new gym.

First Purple Feather Day celebrated. Created by P.E.P. (Parents, Educators, Pupils), the day recognizes students with a grade point above 3.5.

Chemistry storeroom fire, east wing CHS, 1977.



Purple Feather Day, 1978.

1977-8 Bond issue makes new gym possible including showers and locker rooms. Built on north side. First addition since auditorium in 1932. Cost: \$1.3 million. Old gym converted to lunchroom.

1978-9 The new, full-sized gym finished. It cost \$1.3 million. Coca Cola donated scoreboard in return for placement of vending machines in courtyard. Entire building power-washed, re-caulked and waterproofed.



New Gymnasium.

1979

Five-year renovation affecting 300,000 sq. ft. started. In October Central was officially added to National Register of Historic Places. Historical marker placed on lawn.

Chess team won state championship.

Both girls' and boys' track teams ranked first in state.



The Seventies.



Last year for an open Courtyard.

1979-84 Joslyn Art Museum, Creighton University, Internorth and Omaha Public Schools begin plans for land swap.

After much negotiation and at the urging of mayor Mike Boyle, final plans in 1981 closed 22nd street, gave Joslyn its sculpture garden (where faculty parking had been) and Central received a quarter mile track to be shared with Creighton.

In 1981, land north of Davenport purchased. Ironically it included the site of Dewitt Beals' home. Beals was a major voice in Omaha's early school system and has a grade school bearing his name.

Seven million spent updating Central. Courtyard covered and remodeled. New windows throughout and courtyard covering dropped nine month heating costs 40 percent. Summer temperatures climbed with new, tighter building. (Air conditioning didn't arrive until 2004). New restrooms added, old staircase locations converted to office space. Now either sex could use the same stairs!

Administrative offices moved from east to west sides.

Nurses office added.

Old heating system retired, boilers dug up and scrapped. New heat comes from private source five blocks south.

Smokestack toppled.

1980 Central alum Lawrence R. Klein '38 awarded Nobel Prize in Economics.

School Board voted to cover courtyard with translucent skylight and to pave surface. Landscaping started. Helicopters lifted beams to courtyard roof.

Proposed Central - Joslyn campus and land swap fell through. An agreement was reached for a sculpture garden to be created by Joslyn.

Again both boys' and girls' track captured state championships. "Disco Fever" was the theme of the homecoming dance.

1981-82 Extensive renovation continued. JROTC time capsule placed in courtyard to be opened in 100 years.



William Wright, Principal Moller and time capsule.

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DeWitt Beals' 1865 house recommended by school board for acquisition through eminent domain.

Irene Eden (41 yrs), Virginia Lee Pratt '37 (41 yrs), Warren Marquis (32 yrs) and Helen Coulter (41 yrs) all retire from teaching.

Boys' track team won state championships both years.

1983

Joslyn-Central sculpture garden finished.

Eagle banners in the courtyard installed as a gift from class of 1932.

Both girls' and boys' track teams won state championships.

Soccer Club organized even though soccer had not yet become a sanctioned school sport.

Engineering Club begun.

Girls' basketball also topped state.

1984

The Omaha Schools Foundation was established.

Career Center opened after Tech High closed.

Central began awarding letters for academic performance similar to those given for athletics.

First Central team qualified for Academic Decathlon coached by English teacher Marlene Bernstein.

Auditorium refurbished.

Girls' track and basketball teams won state championships.

Central won state championship in football.

1985

Anthropology Club formed.

Drama Club and Drill Team were both begun.

Spirit Club formed to promote team spirit at games. The club died in 1990, revived in 1993.

Tennis team won state championship.

Girls' track team again took state. In fact Central girls' track teams won top state titles every year from 1983 through 1988.

1986

100th Anniversary of *The Register* celebrated. Chemistry Club founded.

1987

MACESSA founded; later became MESA (Minority Engineers & Scientists of Tomorrow).
The Register first used color photos.
Boys' track team won state championship.

1988

Enrollment stood at 1,834 students. Central had been three year high school, but returned to full four grades this year. Principal Moller closed the courtyard to student use. Proposal made to rename Central "Zorinsky High."
Annual described the new sport of soccer as a "kick in the grass."
Rifle team wins city championship as did the debate team.
The Register became fully computerized with four Macintoshes and a Apple laser writer. Mallory Ivy wins 14 All Class gold medals at the State track meet, and four gold medals in one day. She won every individual track event she entered while in high school.

1989

COVE (Central Outreach Volunteer Eagles), a service organization, founded.
Boys' track team won state championship.
The Register won a National Newspaper Pacemaker Award.
Plans laid to make Academic Decathlon a seminar class with title: "Humanities."
Team won third place in nationals.
Courtyard lunch program begun

1990

Green Eagles Club organized to teach about environment.

Boys' and girls' track teams again won state championships.

Academic Decathlon team qualified for national competition for the seventh time in seven years of competing.

1991

United Colors and Nationalities (UCAN) club established.

Physics Club begun.

Tim Romberg placed first in physics division of National Science Fair.

1992

Native American Club organized and dedicated to drug free youth.

Bicycle and Volleyball Clubs began.

Boys' soccer team won state championship.

1993

Bel Canto choir (16 girls) founded. Soccer team won state championship.

During "Spirit Week" students dressed in costumes from bunny slippers to bell bottoms. For one day many wore their clothes backward. Week ended with Homecoming Parade.

The Fall Play was reintroduced.

1994

Project Free (drug free club) formed.

Academic Decathlon team won 16 out of possible 34 gold medals in regional meet.

1995

"Doc" Moller retired after 27 years as principal.

Gary Thompson served as principal from 1995 to 2002.

Film Club and Ballroom Dancing Club organized.

African American Club organized and presented the first African American Forum at Central.

Green Eagles Club revived.

Central High School Foundation formed. Begins raising funds to air condition the school.



Gaylord E. "Doc" Moller in 1981.

1996

Central High School Foundation created to help support the education of the school's students through scholarships and other awards. Philosophy Club begun. Film Club organized. For the sixth year in a row Central placed first in state National Science Olympiad.

1997

History Club began and vowed to "make history not boring."
Central High School Alumni Association founded to celebrate and preserve the school's legacy.
First year for mock trials.
Central team won state chess championship.
Booster Club formed to help support athletics.

1999

Men's chorus formed.
First Alumni Hall of Fame ceremony held.
English Department Chairman Dan Daly retired.
Omaha voters approved a school bond issue of which \$16,500,000 would pay for Central improvements. Work began in 2000.

2000

Central alum Alan J. Heeger '53 awarded Nobel Prize in Chemistry.

Computer Programming Team, Swing Club, and *Fine Lines* literary publication founded.

2000-5

Bond issue and private funds complete several projects: electrical work, air conditioning, lobby for gym, new basketball court, weight and wrestling rooms. Old cafeteria becomes computer classrooms, old gym becomes new cafeteria. Portable classrooms fill in during this work.

2001

The Register again won a National Newspaper Pacemaker Award.

Latino Leaders' Club, Flags, Math Science Upward Bound founded. Hiking Club revived as combined rock climbing and hiking organization.

Major renovation project began, funded by a 1999 bond issue. A village of temporary schoolrooms took over the practice field as sections of the school were turned over to workmen installing the long awaited air conditioning and a building-wide system of raceways and server closets to connect every classroom and office with 21st century technology. Two new additions (the first since 1932) were built on the north side. One features a larger, more modern gym and two floors of athletic conditioning and practice space. The other contains a kitchen capable of feeding Central's 2,000 plus students in a new cafeteria occupying the old gym. Old cafeteria space on the fourth floor of the main building was converted to computer labs.



Old 4th floor cafeteria.

2002

Southern Sudanese Club formed. Gay Straight Alliance first mentioned in O-Book. First mention of Rugby, Ultimate Frisbee, Skateboarding and Tae Kwan Do Clubs in *O-Book*. Book Club formed as a result of *Kaleidoscope* periodical book discussions. SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) organized.

Jerry Bexten named principal. Served until 2006.

2003

The Register won the National Newspaper Pacemaker Award again. CHEETA formed in 2003.

2004

Air conditioning completed.

Old air passages from basement to rest of building bricked.

Alum Susan Buffett '71 asked department heads for wish lists, then granted \$2.5 million to purchase auditorium curtains, lighting and sound equipment and other improvements throughout school. Photography club, Yu Gi Oh, Break Dancing, and Fishing Club all created.

The Register again won the NNPA.

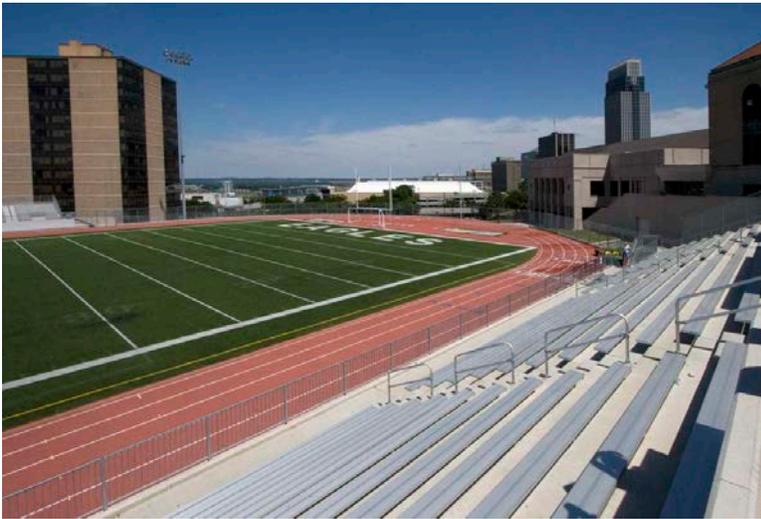
2005

Seemann Stadium opened, dedicated in August. Land cost approximately \$3,000,000. Stadium: \$12,000,000.

As first stadium in school's history, Seemann was result of three-way land/cash transfer between OPS, Joslyn Art Museum and Creighton University. Built with private funds the stadium structure and supporting construction cost more than \$12 million. Susan Thompson Buffet '50, Lee '38 and Willa (Davis) '43 Seeman were major donors.

Other key donors included Walter Scott, Heritage Services and Mike Yanney.

The city did contribute lights and plumbing. The field is oriented northwest to southeast to make room for seating on both sides of the field.



New Seemann Stadium overlooks downtown Omaha.

Film Club and Anime Club formed. Bronze statue of *Victory Eagle* installed at stadium. First mention of College Bound Club and Archery Club appeared in the 2005 O-Book.

Local Kiwanis Club International founded a chapter of its youth-oriented Key Club at Central. *The Register* again won the NNPA.



Victory Eagle greets visitors to new stadium.

2006

Earth Science Club formed. Concert Band Flags and Paintball Clubs formed. Teenage Republicans organized. The Light, a Bible study group, organized.

Greg Emmel took over as principal. Advanced placement U.S. History students began World War II casualty biography project. Students researched lives of Central grads who died in the war. Composed in-depth bios on each.

CHS becomes the first high school in Omaha to offer Mandarin Chinese.

2007

Archives scanning project begins. Clippings inventoried. Work done by Alumni Association to preserve Central's history.

Central won state championships in football, basketball and track. Basketball team also took state championship the year before (2006) and the year after (2008). The 2007 girls' track team also won the state championship.



State track championship symbolized a year in which Central won a Triple Crown in sports.

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2008

Sports Illustrated named Central one of top ten high school athletic programs in the country.

Nighttime architectural lighting for building completed, a project of the Central High School Foundation. Lights turned on. Cost \$175,000.

Archives scanning and inventory of archives, city wide CHS history material, and *Register* collection completed.

Westboro (Kansas) church protestors peacefully driven off school grounds by Central students.

2009

Central took back state championship in chess. CHS had been state champion for five straight years, but dropped to second in 2008.

2010

Central won state championship in basketball.
Sherwood Foundation contributes land north of Dodge at 20th for school parking lot. Had been site of Jewish Community Center.
OPS caps Central enrollment. Four to six hundred students go on waiting list.
Boys track team wins state.
Number of buses serving school increased from eight to 27 due to new Learning Community attendance rules.

2011

The CHS Foundation moved its office from 50th and Dodge to The Historic Library Building at 19th and Harney, a 19th century structure that had housed the Omaha Public Library for 80 years. At one time Central's library was an official branch of the Omaha Public Library.
Central won Nebraska State basketball and track championships.
Dr. Keith Bigsby was named the 18th principal.

2012

Central made an International Baccalaureate World School, a prestigious, academic program.
Both boys and girls basketball teams won Nebraska State championships.
Central High School Foundation completed a 1.4 million dollar capital campaign making Central a completely wireless campus.
Ginny Bauer, long time CHS treasurer and guardian of the complete collection of The Register, retired.
For the first time in history Central was forced to close enrollment when more than 1,200 prospective students applied for 685 openings. The school started the 2012-2013 year with a little more than 2,500 students making it the largest high school in the state.
Student Marika Svolos gets both national ACT and SAT perfect scores.



1854-2016

2013 The Fishing and Philosophy Clubs were founded.

2015 School district supports a foundation proposal to build a 4,500 square foot addition in place of east side portico. Foundation to pay for new structure, OPS to pay for remodeling existing rooms replaced by new structure. Total cost between 15 and 20 million. New structure will feature new library, black box theater, art and music rooms.

2016 Bond issue supplies funds for cleaning and tuck pointing the building.

More than 100 Surface Pro 3 tablets added to teacher and student electronic tools.

Register questioned whether newly installed (2012) International Baccalaureate program caused division in school body.

Academic decathlon team placed second in state for third year in a row.

Nebraska Supreme Court held session in Central's auditorium for students to watch. First time in Omaha history.