

# Central High School Minneapolis Collection

## COLLECTION SUMMARY

**Collection number:** B553

Accession #s: 1956.500; 1969.014; 1986.500; 1988.031; 1989.010; 2005.500; 2010.500; 2013.501; 2019.015

**Collection repository:** Hennepin History Museum  
2303 Third Ave.  
Minneapolis, MN 55404

**Collection title:** Central High School, Minneapolis

**Dates:** 1876-1984 (bulk 1913-1950s)

**Extent:** 5 boxes; 5.3 linear feet

**Creator:** Central High School; Anstice Abbott, May E. Abbott, Dorothy Anderson, Maud Bliss, Ray R. Knight, Dorothy McGuire Hanson, Sidnee Pattee, Herbert E. Swift, and others

**Language of material:** English, Norwegian

**Processed by:** Sophie Hunt, 2019

## ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY

Central High School was the first high school in Minneapolis. It existed under three names: Union School (1860-1863), Washington School (circa 1867-1878), and Central High School (1878-1982).

### Union School and Washington School

Union School was a two-story Greek Revival style schoolhouse on Third Avenue between Fourth and Fifth Streets. It opened as an elementary school in 1858, with a high school program added in 1860. At the time, the eastern boundary of Minneapolis lay at the Mississippi River; the village of St. Anthony, on the eastern side of the river, had its own school district. Union School was the first public school in Minneapolis.

Union School burned down in 1864. It was replaced by the Washington School, which opened on the same site about 1867. The last class to graduate from Washington School, the class of 1878, had only 19 graduates. In 1888, the Washington School property was sold to Hennepin County and the City of Minneapolis to build the courthouse and city hall.

### **“Old” Central High School**

The Minneapolis Board of Education opened Central High School in 1878 at 4th Avenue and 11th Street. It was still the only public high school in Minneapolis, which in 1872 had annexed most of St. Anthony. The first Central building, designed by architects Long and Haglin, was notable for its specialized rooms. These included four study halls, 15 recitation rooms, a laboratory, and two lecture halls.

During the three decades that Central remained in this building, Minneapolis experienced a population boom, which led to a corresponding boom in the number of students. Despite the addition of an annex to the Central building in 1886, the student body continued to outgrow the facility. In 1913, the Board of Education under Superintendent Charles M. Jordan moved Central to a new building. After Central moved to a new site, graduates often affectionately referred to the old building as Old Central High. The building, which later housed Minneapolis Vocational High School, was razed in 1936.

### **“New” Central High School**

The second Central High School building opened in 1913 at 4th Avenue and 34th Street in South Minneapolis. It was one of many new high schools of its era, which also included East (1900), West (1907), North (1915), Edison (1922), and Roosevelt (1922). Designed by St. Louis architect William B. Ittner, the new Central High building was featured in *The Western Architect*. It also appeared in the *Minneapolis Journal*, which published a series of articles exploring whether the school was worth the \$765,000 that taxpayers had paid for its construction. During the seven decades that Central occupied this second building, it served as the high school for students graduating from Bryant, Jefferson, and Phillips junior high schools. Central was one of eighteen public schools in Minneapolis to close in 1982. The building was razed in 1989.

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT**

The collection is arranged in three series with six subseries:

- Series 1: Washington School
- Series 2: Old Central High School
  - Subseries 1: Programs and Publications
  - Subseries 2: Alumni Materials
- Series 3: New Central High School
  - Subseries 1: Meeting Minutes and Correspondence
  - Subseries 2: Girls Club
  - Subseries 3: World War II Participation
  - Subseries 4: Publications and Programs
  - Subseries 5: Ephemera
  - Subseries 6: Alumni Materials

### **Series 1: Washington School**

The “Washington School” series contains graduation, commencement, and theatrical programs from Washington School dating from 1876-1878.

### **Series 2: Old Central High School**

The “Old Central High School” series documents the activities of the first Central High School and its graduates from 1879-1949. The “Programs and Publications” subseries, which dates from 1879-1913, includes programs and invitations relating to graduations, performances, and special events, as well as issues of *The High School Orb*, a periodical published monthly by students in the Philomathean and Amphictyon societies. Highlights of this subseries include a ceremony celebrating the return of the 13<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Minnesota Volunteers from the Spanish-American War, located in the “Programs—performances and events” folder.

The “Alumni records” subseries, which dates from 1899-1949, follows the lives of Old Central High students before and after graduation. The first half of the subseries contains a survey of Old Central High graduates conducted by Superintendent Charles M. Jordan in 1913, followed by letters and clippings from an Old Central High reunion held in 1934. The second half of the subseries contains photographs, documents, and reunion materials organized by graduating class

### **Series 3: New Central High School**

The “New Central High School” series is the largest series in the collection. It documents the activities of the second Central High School and its graduates from 1912 to 1984, with the bulk of the series dating from 1913 to the 1940s. The “Meeting Minutes and Correspondence” contains record books and correspondence relating to the daily operations of Central High School, including materials created by teachers, administrators, and student groups. The “Girls’ Club” subseries contains record books and correspondence related to the Girls’ Club student group. These subseries date from 1919 to 1956.

When the United States entered World War II, the students, teachers, and alumni of Central High School became involved in war efforts, both through military service and by purchasing war bonds. The “World War II” subseries documents these efforts. The bulk of the subseries relates to *War Service Record, 1941-1945*, a bound volume compiled by teacher Clare Bell in the late 1940s.

The “Programs and Publications” subseries contains publications produced by or about Central High School from 1914 to 1982. The “Theatrical and musical performances” folder contains a program written in Norwegian, as well as two performances related to the women’s suffrage movement. Within the “Ephemera” series is a set of ten audio recordings of the Central High Band and Choirs, once lent through the Central High School library. The call slip for this audio set as well as an album cover are stored in Box 5 of the present collection. The audio discs are stored separately, in Room 1, Column A, Row 16. The “Alumni records” subseries, which dates from 1929 to 1984, contains photographs, documents, and reunion materials from Central alumni, organized by graduating class.

For both the “Old Central High” and “New Central High” series, there are points of overlap between the materials stored in both “Alumni records” and those in “Programs and Publications” or other Museum collections. In most cases, items stored in “Alumni records” were donated to the Museum by the families of individual alumni; they often contain notes or other markings that

appear to have been made by that person. Items stored elsewhere may also have been donated by alumni, but either they do not contain personal information or their provenance was not easily obtainable during processing.

## ACCESS

The collection is open for researchers and has no restrictions.

## COPYRIGHT

The researcher assumes the responsibility for ensuring copyright is followed. When and where possible the archive will provide information related to the copyright owners, but it will be the responsibility of the researcher to ensure copyright laws are followed. Requests for permission to publish material in this collection should be directed to the Archivist.

## RELATED MATERIAL

Hennepin History Museum:

- Central High School photograph collection, SCH-S 3.2 mp
- Minneapolis Public Schools, B532
- *The Annual, The Senior, and The Centralian*, 1906-1982 (incomplete) in Yearbooks
- *Central High Times*, 1932-1933 in Newspapers

Hennepin County Public Library:

- Digital Collection contains yearbooks *The Annual* and *The Centralian*, 1890-1982 (incomplete): <https://digitalcollections.hclib.org/digital/collection/Yearbooks>
- Books on class reunions, building expansion in Special Collections

Minnesota Historical Society:

- Minneapolis Public Schools. Miscellaneous records and Miscellaneous records of schools
- Minneapolis Public Schools Neighborhood Survey, circa 1973

## ACQUISITION

Donation information has not been found for the bulk of the collection, which appears to have been donated by the Minneapolis Public Schools. Other items were donated by Anstice Abbott, Louise Burwell, Mrs. Harold Dedrick, Susan A. Hanson, Carl Jacobi, Lois Johnson, Gladys Pattee, Janyce Swift, John Trulen, and Barbara Willits. Many of these people attended Central High or are related to Central alumni.

## COLLECTION INVENTORY

### Series 1: Washington School

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	
2	24	Commencement and graduation exercises, 1876-1878
2	25	Philomathean Society performance, 1878

**Series 2: Old Central High School****--Subseries 1: Programs and Publications**

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	
2	26	Donations and prizes, 1887-1895, 1909
2	27	Programs—commencement exercises, 1879-1890
2	28	Programs—commencement exercises, 1893-1913
2	29	Programs—graduation exercises, 1904-1911
2	30	Programs—city and district graduations, 1898-1903
2	31	Invitations, 1888-1907
5	88	Programs—class plays, 1894, 1905
2	32	Programs—performances and events, 1879-1899
5	92	<i>The High School Orb</i> periodical, volumes 4-6 (incomplete), 1891-1892

**--Subseries 2: Alumni Materials**

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	
2	60	Alumni survey – list of graduates and correspondence, circa 1913
2	61	Alumni survey – responses A-D, 1913
2	62	Alumni survey – responses E-H, 1913
2	63	Alumni survey – responses J-O, 1913
2	64	Alumni survey – responses P-W, 1913
3	65	Central Alumni Banquet invitation, 1915
3	66	Old Central High reunion, 1934
3	67	Class of 1881 – class photograph, 1881, 1934
3	68	Class of 1890 – list of graduates by course, undated
3	69	Class of 1899 – Ray R. Knight class play materials, 1899
3	70	Class of 1899 – Ray R. Knight Golden Anniversary letter, 1949
3	71	Class of 1901 – May E. Abbott commencement program, 1901
3	72	Class of 1902 – Maud Bliss centennial keepsake, 1889
3	73	Class of 1902 – Sidnee Pattee report cards, programs, 1889-1902
3	74	Class of 1906 – Anstice Abbott <i>The Annual</i> , 1906
5	86	North-Western football champions photograph, 1899

**Series 2: New Central High School****--Subseries 1: Meeting Minutes and Correspondence**

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	
1	1	Superintendent's Office – letters to principals, circa 1923-1932
1	2	Superintendent's Office – minutes of principals' meetings, 1931-1934
1	3	Principal Calvin W. Jarvis correspondence, 1929-1942
1	4	Teacher Marie Sellers correspondence, 1951, 1956
1	5	French Club/ Le Foyer – founding documents and correspondence, circa 1924-1937
1	6	French Club/ Le Foyer – minutes, 1924-1937
1	7	Girls' Athletic Association – records, 1921-1942
1	8	Girls' Athletic Association – programs, correspondence, clipping, circa 1921-1942

1	9	Latin Club – minutes, 1946-1949
1	10	Latin Club – constitution and correspondence, circa 1946-1950
1	11	C. C. C. (Cleanliness Courtesy Consideration) Cabinet records – circa 1924-1932

**--Subseries 2: Girls' Club**

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	
1	12	Girls' Club – minutes, 1919-1926
1	13	Girls' Club – minutes, 1927-1936
1	14	Girls' Club – minutes, 1936-1951
1	15	Girls' Club – treasurer's report, 1934-1935
1	16	Girls' Club – treasurer's report, 1936-1942
1	17	Girls' Club – correspondence, 1924-1927, 1947

**--Subseries 3: World War II**

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	
1	18	War Service Record—bound volume, circa 1947
1	19	War Service Record—items enclosed in book, 1949-1954
1	20	War Service Record—Clare Bell notes, circa 1947-1952
1	21	War Service Record—Clare Bell clippings, 1946-1947
1	22	The Names of Those Who Gave Their Lives in World War II, undated
1	23	Central High School Service Men's Register, 1943-1946
5	93	United States War Bonds purchased by Central High, 1943-1946

**--Subseries 4: Programs and Publications**

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	
2	33	Programs—commencement exercises, 1914-1926
2	34	Programs—commencement exercises, 1927-1933
2	35	Programs—commencement exercises, 1934-1944
2	36	Programs—commencement exercises, 1945-1967
2	37	Programs—graduation exercises, 1916-1924
2	38	Programs—class plays, 1914-1932
2	39	Programs—Glee Club performances, 1914-1926
2	40	Programs—theatrical and musical performances, 1915-1931
2	41	Programs—special programs and banquets, 1914-1919, 1957
2	42	Programs—football games, 1926
5	90	Programs—Central High Closing Tribute, 1982
2	43	The Spectator periodical, 1914
2	44	The Quest literary journal, volume 1, 1923
2	45	The Quest literary journal, volume 2, 1923
2	46	The Quest literary journal, volume 3, 1924-1925
2	47	The Quest literary journal, volume 4, 1925
2	48	The Quest literary journal, volume 5, 1926-1927
2	49	The Quest literary journal, volume 7, 1929
2	50	The Quest literary journal, volume 8, 1930
2	51	The Quest literary journal, volume 9, 1931

2	52	The Quest literary journal, volume 10, 1932
5	89	Parent-Teacher Broadcaster, November 1932
2	53	Spring Winds literary journal, 1935
2	54	Tribute to Triumph: Central High School 1860-1982, published 1982
4		Bound volume: The Central High News, volume 1, 1915
4		Bound volume: The Central High News, volume 2, 1915-1916
4		Bound volume: The Central High News, volume 3, 1916-1917 – 2 copies
4	70	The Central High News, volumes 50-82 (incomplete), 1943-1956

**--Subseries 5: Ephemera**Box   Folder

2	55	Floorplan and building inspection, 1912, 1914
2	56	Clippings, 1913-1918
2	57	Pamphlets on economic crisis, 1930s
2	58	Principal Calvin W. Jarvis, Historical Sketch of Central High District, 1930s
2	59	Lists of teachers and yearbook editors, undated
5	94	State and national awards, 1930-1937, 1963, 1967
5	91	Central High School Band and Choirs library loan card and album cover, 1970s
		Central High School Choir, 10-inch vinyl, 1961-1962 – 2 copies
		Central High School Choir, 10-inch vinyl, 1963
Audio discs: Room 1, Column A, Row 16		Central High School Concert Choir, 12-inch vinyl, 1973
		Central High School Choirs, 12-inch vinyl, 1974 – 2 copies
		Central High School Band, 10-inch vinyl, 1963
		Elsa's Procession, Central High Band, 10-inch vinyl, circa 1960s
		Fantasy on an American Air, Central High Band, 10-inch vinyl, circa 1960s
		The Roosevelt High School Choir, 12-inch vinyl, circa 1970s

**--Subseries 6: Alumni Materials**Box   Folder

3	75	Class of 1925 – reunions, 1960, 1975
3	76	Class of 1927 – 50 <sup>th</sup> anniversary program, 1977
3	77	Class of 1928 – reunions and newsletter, 1978-1984
3	78	Class of 1929 – Dorothy Anderson homework assignment, 1927
3	79	Class of 1931 – class reunion roster, 1956
3	80	Class of 1937 – reunion roster and program, 1952, 1987
3	73	Class of 1947 – H. E. Swift programs and clippings, 1946-1947
5	87	Class of 1954 – Dave Johnson track and field photograph, 1953
3	82	Alumni registration book, 1933
3	83	Alumni registration book pages, circa 1937
3	84	Alumni registration book, 1956-1959



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