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Archivum Plena: The Quest for a Fulfilling Past



Honors Thesis

Madeline McDermott

Department: History

Advisor: Colleen Hoelscher, MA, MLIS

Juan Santamarina, Ph.D.

April 2015

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Abstract

Lyons Township High School, founded in 1888 in a suburb of Chicago, celebrated its 125th anniversary in 2014. For seven years, a project researching and preserving the history of the school has been maintained. Over the summer of 2014, an archive was established for the school so that they could continue to keep safe all the historical items that had been kept, found, or donated. In addition to recounting the history of the high school and its relationship with the local area, this thesis also follows the process of creating the school's archive and compares the experience there to related literature on the subject.

Dedication and Acknowledgements

For Papa – thank you for the greatest gift.

First and foremost, thanks go to Patrick Page for years of teaching, advice, and dedication. Thank you to Colleen Hoelscher and Jennifer Brancato for the start of an education on archives, and to the administrative staff of Lyons Township for the support and confidence. Additionally, thank you to all who were the first readers of this thesis, and to everyone who has listened to me talk on end about it for a year and a half.



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Introduction

Lyons Township High School is a public high school in La Grange, Illinois serving grades nine through twelve. The village of La Grange is located in Cook County, approximately twelve miles outside of the center of Chicago. Incorporated in 1879, its current population is about 15,000.

Lyons Township High School, known as LTHS within the community, was voted into existence in 1888. It was the sixth township high school to be created in Illinois.¹ Its first graduating class in 1891 was seven young women; today, graduating classes number in the high 900s or low 1000s. The original campus (locally referred to simply as “North”), built in 1888, now only holds the juniors and seniors. Another campus, appropriately nicknamed “South,” sits about a mile southwest of the first building in the neighboring village of Western Springs. This complex, built in 1956, houses the freshmen and sophomores. The population of LTHS comes from over half a dozen towns and villages in Cook County. Students from La Grange, La Grange Park, and Western Springs make up a large percentage of the school’s body, with students also coming from Hodgkins, Countryside, Indian Head Park, McCook, and parts of Brookfield and Burr Ridge.

The Alumni Association at LTHS maintains the school’s archives. Located in the basement of North Campus, they are accessible by appointment through the Alumni office. Within the archives are priceless resources on the history of the school and the local area. As a public high school, the course offerings of LTHS often reflect national trends as well as local needs. By examining the resources in the archives, researchers can achieve a better understanding of not only life in LTHS’s district beginning in the late nineteenth century, but also life in a mid-sized suburb of a major city in the United States. Information in the archives

¹ Marion Chandler Hays, *Secondary Education in Lyons Township* (University of Chicago: 1937), 1.

could be of interest to family genealogists, local historians, urban historians, and educational historians, as well as community members linked to the school, such as teachers, administrators, and alumni.

Because of the wide-ranging appeal of LTHS's archives, it is important to preserve and maintain the items that are currently in it and that will be retained by the school in the future. In the summer of 2014, I worked to create a system of maintenance for LTHS that would allow administrators or teachers to add items to and locate and preserve items in the archives. It is my hope that this project will raise awareness about the archives at LTHS. This would help researchers recognize resources that could be literally right in their neighborhood, resources that are rather unique in their nature. Because of its long history, LTHS has documents and artifacts that are a rare look into education in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Additionally, La Grange's close proximity to Chicago has influenced its history and its population. The offerings of LTHS reflect the changes going on "downtown," because those events and movements also had an effect on the district. The archives offer information appealing to people interested in the history of La Grange and nearby suburbs, the history of Chicago and its influence on the suburbs, and the history of education in Illinois and the United States as a whole.

The purpose of this thesis is twofold. Firstly, it is to prove that the history of La Grange and Lyons Township High School is significant enough to historians and community members to necessitate preservation, which can be done by protecting and maintaining the archives of the high school. In order to properly classify and contextualize the items in the archives, it was necessary to research the history of the school. This allowed for the identification of items, and for the improvement of existing knowledge about the school. Secondly, it is to act as a guide for others looking to create or maintain an archive in another high school or similar educational setting.

Local History

Chicago History

The history of Lyons Township is closely linked to the history of Chicago. La Grange would not exist as it does today without Chicago, and especially not without the Great Chicago Fire and its legacy. A general understanding of the history of the area adds to the richness of the story of LTHS.

Chicago is relatively unique in that its population expanded extremely quickly in the mid-nineteenth century. For the first century and a half of its existence, the area had a small population, even though it boasted some key natural resources. The region sits on the remains of a primordial lake, Lake Chicago. When the polar ice cap covering the region melted for the fourth and final time, it created this ancient lake. It was somewhat larger than Lake Michigan, with its western boundary reaching to the east side of La Grange.² Bluff Avenue, one of the few curved streets in the village, gets that shape because it follows the historic coast of Lake Chicago. Lake Chicago receded into what is today's Lake Michigan.

The Chicagoland area was full of raw materials ready to be used by its inhabitants. Underneath the soil is bedrock of Niagara limestone.³ This would prove to be doubly useful, first as a building material and then as a solid base for the skyscrapers Chicago would be the first to develop. Lake Michigan was an obvious boon, as a way to trade with other communities on the lake and in areas it linked to, as well as being a source of fresh water and of fish. The states along the lake had vast forests ready to be harvested for timber, and southeast of the city were fertile farming regions.

² "Nature Bulletin No. 57," *Forest Preserve District of Cook County* (March 16, 1946), <http://www.newton.dep.anl.gov/natbltn/001-099/nb057.htm>

³ Michael J. Chrzastowski, "Chicagoland: Geology and the Making of a Metropolis," *Illinois Department of Natural Resources: Illinois Geological Survey* (2005): 6.

Still, Chicago did not seem to be suitable for a large human population. The center of Chicago, today commonly known as “the Loop,” was originally all marsh.⁴ The name of the city comes from a Potawatomi word, “checagou.” This translates to “wild onion,” which grew all through the swamp.⁵ Lake Michigan had no natural harbor ready to be put into commercial use, and the stretch of lakeshore where the Chicago River connected frequently filled with sand.⁶

The original residents of the area were American Indians. Several Algonquin tribes lived in Northern Illinois, resulting in the eventual naming of a northern suburb after the tribe. The Potawatomi lived in what would become La Grange.⁷ Their trade paths to the lake eventually became some of the major roads for the county, including Ogden Avenue, which runs through the north end of La Grange. Part of what made this region so attractive to the American Indians and eventual European settlers was what was known as Mud Lake.⁸

During heavy rainfalls, the Des Plaines River would overflow its banks in what would eventually be the nearby suburb of Lyons. When this occurred, boats were able to move between the Chicago River and the Des Plaines River, the latter of which led to the Mississippi.⁹ Because the Chicago River emptied into Lake Michigan, this allowed trade from all over the Great Lakes region to potentially make its way to the Gulf of Mexico. This muddy area was eventually named the Chicago Portage, and its relationship to the accessibility of trade regions is a large part of how Chicago grew to its current size.¹⁰

⁴ Bessie Louise Pierce, *A History of Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937), 4.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Chrzastowski, 2.

⁷ William J. Cromie, ed., *La Grange Centennial History* (La Grange, IL: La Grange Area Historical Society, 1979), 2.

⁸ Pierce, 4.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁰ Chrzastowski, 2.

The first European men to see what would someday become Chicago were Louis Joliet and Père Jacques Marquette, French explorers and missionaries.¹¹ They arrived in 1673 as they traveled up the Mississippi River. They were introduced to the Chicago Portage, and quickly realized its value for trade. While American Indian wars in the early eighteenth century inhibited trade in the area for a while, the French and Indian and the American Revolutionary Wars renewed the importance of the area.¹² Jean Baptiste Point du Sable was the first Englishman to lay claim to the region. In 1783, all the land up to the Mississippi became an American possession, including Chicago.¹³

In 1825, the Erie Canal was constructed, connecting the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean.¹⁴ The populations of the area around the lakes started to expand rapidly, as the economies of several different areas were now linked. In that year, Chicago's white settler population was only one hundred people.¹⁵ By the end of the nineteenth century, it would be over a million.¹⁶ The government began moving the American Indian populations to reservations west of the Mississippi to make room for all the settlers who were flooding the area.¹⁷

The building of the Illinois and Michigan (I&M) Canal in 1848 replaced the Chicago Portage as the link between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi River. That canal was replaced again in 1900 by the Ships and Sanitary Canal. Additionally, in 1900 the flow of the Chicago River was reversed to flow east to west. Prior to this, the river fed pollution from industries into the lake, which was the primary water source for the city and surrounding area. This caused health

¹¹ Cromie, 2.

¹² Pierce, 11.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Cromie, 3.

¹⁵ Ibid., 4.

¹⁶ Campbell Gibson, "Population of the 100 Largest Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States: 1790 – 1990," Bureau of the Census, Population Division, June 1998.<http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/twps0027.html#citypop>

¹⁷ Cromie, 2.

concerns and disease outbreaks. With this reversal, water supplies cleaned up and transportation from the lake into the Mississippi River became much easier.

Chicago quickly developed a reputation as a city with opportunities for immigrants. In 1856, one-fourteenth of the immigrants entering the country in New York moved to Chicago. By 1860, the city was home to thousands of immigrants, most of them coming from Ireland, Germany, and Eastern Europe. Almost half of the citizens were foreign-born.¹⁸ The construction of the I&M Canal had created a labor shortage, and the jobs were filled by immigrants.¹⁹ Many of these immigrants were also coming from Eastern Europe. Workers' unions were common in that region, and were established in Chicago by the new residents. These unions often created social clubs and groups, who lobbied for the institution of free public education in 1855.²⁰ Education was being emphasized in the city, and for the first time, secondary education was also being encouraged. The rapidly expanding city would soon overflow its boundaries, leading to the development of the suburbs. Within these suburbs, a desire for good public education eventually played into the creation of LTHS.

¹⁸ John T. Frederick, dir., *Illinois: A Descriptive and Historical Guide* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1939), 4.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 78.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 78.

La Grange History

The first settlers of La Grange came to the area in the first half of the nineteenth century. In 1827, Robert Leitch purchased 440 acres in the village.²¹ Other early settlers included Thomas Covell and Joseph Vial. The latter lived at the intersection of Plainfield and Wolf Roads in 1833, which also was the last campsite of the Potawatomi in the area before being pushed west.²² Leitch named his land “Kensington Heights,” and the area went by this name for another fifty years.²³ The early villagers had come out using the traditional American Indian trade routes, specifically Ogden Avenue, later a main thoroughfare. In 1870, his land was sold to a Mrs. Breed, who in turn sold 600 acres to the village’s founder, Franklin Dwight Cossitt.²⁴

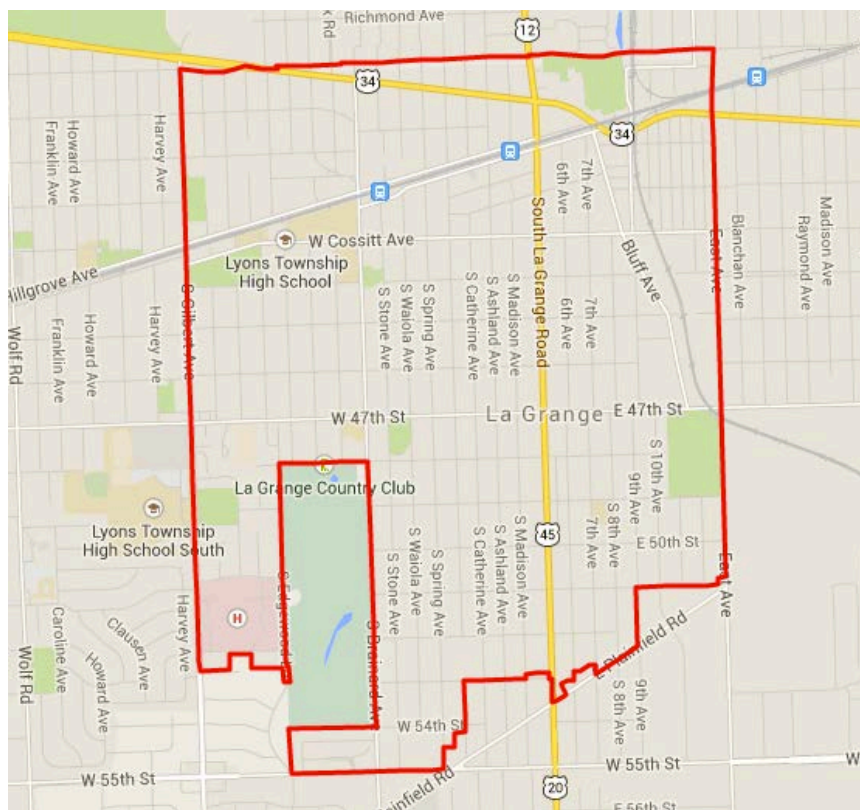


Image 1: The original land owned by Franklin D. Cossitt. Source: Google Maps

²¹ Cromie, 2.

²² Ibid., 6.

²³ Ibid., 8.

²⁴ *La Grange Diamond Jubilee* (La Grange, IL, 1954), 11.

Franklin Cossitt was born in Granby, Connecticut in 1821.²⁵ His family owned a plantation in La Grange, Tennessee, that was destroyed in the Civil War. Looking for a new start, he moved to Chicago around 1862. Before moving out to La Grange, he owned a grocery in the city. His 1870 land purchase became the initial boundaries of La Grange, which was Ogden Avenue south to 47th Street, and Bluff Avenue (the original lakeshore of Lake Chicago) west to Waiola Avenue.²⁶

La Grange was originally known as a “milk stop” town. The Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad was completed in 1864, and included a stop in La Grange.²⁷ This 38 mile long line ran from the center of Chicago out to the western suburb of Aurora. La Grange sits a little less than halfway between the two. The first passenger train ran through on May 20, 1864. The original train station for the village was at the intersection of Hillgrove and Gilbert Avenues, and was called Hazel Glenn. In 1868 it was moved by John Unold and John Robb, local businessmen.²⁸ This station still exists in basically the same location, as the Stone Avenue Station.

The Great Chicago Fire catapulted La Grange into existence. Raging through the city on October 8 and 9, 1871, it killed at least 300 people and left 90,000 homeless.²⁹ At this point, Cossitt began to develop and sell off the land he had purchased in La Grange. His main market was middle class families looking for a safer area to live in. They were able to move into La Grange because they were able to afford the train fare to get back into the city to their places of employment.

Cossitt made sure that his new village would conform to his ideals and morals. He created a tripartite base for La Grange of an emphasis on religion, education,

²⁵ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, “1900 United States Census: Individual Record: Franklin Cossitt,” <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MS7F-55C>.

²⁶ Cromie, 8.

²⁷ Ibid., 6.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 7.

and family.³⁰ He donated land for churches of all denominations, as well as making sure land was set aside for elementary schools. To protect family life, he put in liquor restrictions to avoid the village becoming a “saloon town” like neighboring Lyons. This emphasis on quiet family life and wholesome values directly affected the creation and early goals of LTHS. Without his desire to better the residents of his town through education, the push for a high school would have been weaker. He established the precedent that education was important for the life of the village. Additionally, religion remained a theme at LTHS for over eight decades, with religious poems and pieces often being featured in issues of the paper.

There were physical aspects to La Grange that made it attractive to homebuyers, as well. The village had access to good well water, a necessity before the reversal of the Chicago River cleaned up the water of the lake. Local limestone quarries offered easy access to building materials, and the 1,000 shade trees planted by Cossitt himself would beautify the streets for years to come. The area already boasted a schoolhouse built of limestone.³¹ Cossitt’s daughter even made 300 jars of jelly from local fruit trees to send into the city to encourage people to move out.³² Forty houses were put up for sale, priced between \$2,000 and \$8,600 (\$40,000 to \$162,000 in today’s money).³³

Early residents were willing to overlook initial problems, such as unpaved streets and unreliable utilities. By 1895, La Grange was the largest town between Chicago and Aurora on the CB&Q Rail Road line.³⁴ Telephone lines were laid in the late 1880s, the village’s first newspaper began in 1895, and the Suburban Electric Way streetcar system started running in 1897.³⁵ The value of La Grange

³⁰ Ibid., 8.

³¹ Cromie, 9.

³² *La Grange Diamond Jubilee*, 17.

³³ Cromie, 10.

³⁴ Ibid., 14.

³⁵ Ibid., 10.

as a place to invest in a home increased in 1909 when David Burnham's Chicago Plan placed the village in the center of a green belt around the city of Chicago. This ensured that the natural beauty of the area would be preserved, and that the village would never be truly threatened by heavy industry. The village was expanding rapidly, and the desire for secondary education for the children was growing.

The History of LTHS

The Origins of LTHS

Education had been part of the landscape in Illinois for over a hundred years before the formation of LTHS. The Land Ordinance of 1785 reserved sections of land for the maintenance of public schools, and the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 wrote that “schools and other means of education shall forever be encouraged.”³⁶ An 1825 law allowed the formation of school districts, as well as the levying of taxes to support the white students in that district between the ages of 6 and 21.³⁷ However, this taxation allowance was revoked in 1829.

The 1830s and 1840s saw a very rudimentary public school system. Funding was hurt by that removal of compulsory taxation, and mostly depended on the desires of the local population. In 1845, a law was passed incorporating congressional townships as school townships.³⁸ This allowed voters in these townships to have the authority to levy taxes for the schools as they wanted. Lyons Township High School gets its name from this law. While the school itself is located in the village of La Grange (and after 1956, in the neighboring village of Western Springs), La Grange is part of the township of Lyons. Townships in areas of Illinois are used as sub-county divisions, and in northern Illinois provide some of the public services for the area, like water, road maintenance, and education.

In La Grange, education was one of the first institutions the settlers developed. As early as 1834, there was a log cabin school at the corner of Joliet and Wolf Avenues. Foreshadowing the “family, religion, education” values of Cossitt, it also functioned as a church on Sundays. In 1848, the cabin was moved, to be repurposed as a blacksmith shop. New schools were built at Plainfield and Willow

³⁶ Frederick, 95.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

Springs Avenues, and at East and Joliet Avenues.³⁹ The latter of these was a one-room country schoolhouse that was also the home of its teacher, Margaret McNaughton. She had taught at the first local school as well, and married one of the early settlers, Samuel Vial.⁴⁰

The first school in the village proper of La Grange was on Brainard Avenue north of Ogden Avenue. In the 1860s, it was moved south on Brainard to be north of Cossitt Avenue, where the North Campus of LTHS is today.⁴¹ Public support for elementary education was high. Vial donated land to build a permanent school at East and Joliet, where his wife taught. In 1889, Elizabeth Harper donated land for a school in the Congress Park neighborhood of Brookfield, La Grange's eastern neighbor. However, the idea of supporting a high school was initially unpopular.

Before the spread of public high schools, children either would stop attending school after eighth grade, or attend private high schools.⁴² This required an investment on the family's part, and those who attended private high schools usually came back to their hometowns to teach there. After the Great Chicago Fire, the demographics of La Grange began to change. The new families in the area who had moved out from the city were generally supported by a white-collar job. They were middle-class, and looking to improve themselves and their children. However, there was still a large population of farmers who lived on the outskirts of the village. Many of them did not see a need to provide their children with an education that they themselves were getting along well enough without, and also disliked the idea of higher taxes to support the school.⁴³

Early informal classes may have been occurring in the area before the creation of LTHS. 1886 saw the first dedicated effort to create a high school. David Lyman,

³⁹ *La Grange Diamond Jubilee*, 25.

⁴⁰ Cromie, 38.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 47.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 48.

a local prominent businessman, gathered with other likeminded figures in the community, in a room above a saloon in nearby Lyons. The first referendum to form LTHS went to a vote on April 9, 1887, and failed to pass. Undeterred, the school's supporters brought it back in April of the next year. This time, it passed by a 380 to 328 vote. The public had decided that it needed a high school, and plans to not only form classes but to build a school and provide for its needs were soon in motion.

The Early Days of LTHS

In September 1888, 39 high school students met their teacher and principal H.W. Thurston. Classes were held in a rented room in the basement of Cossitt School. A \$20,000 bond had been approved to begin the construction of a proper high school building, but the final cost would be closer to \$35,000. This would be equal to almost \$900,000 in 2013.⁴⁴ In 1891, seven young women became the first graduates of Lyons Township. The fact that they were all female is a notable one in and of itself. At this point, education for women, especially higher education, was seen as unnecessary. That families were not only willing to educate their daughters, but allow them to be in school as opposed to at a job, shows that they were relatively well-off, and eager to see their children live a better life than that of their parents. This first commencement ceremony was a celebration for the entire community. People packed into the now-defunct Suburban Club on 6th Avenue to watch those young ladies receive their diplomas.⁴⁵

The initial course offerings of LTHS also speak to the needs of the community. Early graduation requirements included Ancient Greek, Latin, history, mathematics, and literature classes.⁴⁶ These students were being prepared for white-collar careers, academia, or the life of a gentleman. From this, it can be inferred that many students at LTHS came from well-off families, who were not in a position where their children would be expected to perform manual labor. Nor were the families in need of additional income, which would have prevented them from sending their children to school in favor of finding immediate employment. By 1890, the school offered classes following a regular track, a college preparation track, and a manual training track. In just two years, LTHS had broadened its curriculum to meet the needs of the area. It also proves that while families in the district were comfortable enough to send their employable children to school, sacrificing the income they could bring back, there was still a

⁴⁴ Cromie, 38.

⁴⁵ Hays, chapter XI, page 1.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

portion of the population who knew that their jobs upon graduation would not be white-collar.

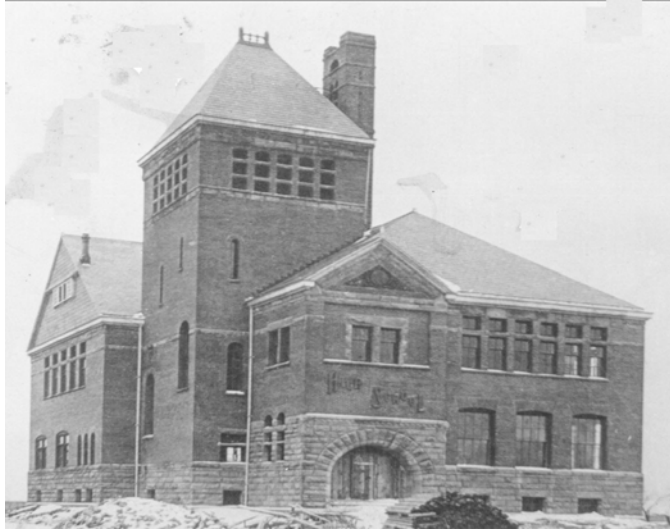


Image 2: LTHS under construction in 1898. The windows of the bell tower still have yet to receive glass. Courtesy Alumni Association Archives.

Before 1910, an entrance exam was required for admittance, even though it was a public high school.⁴⁷

This shows that students coming in were expected to be already fairly well educated, and that entrance was competitive. Education across the district was not

regulated, and so the administration wanted to ensure that students would

have the knowledge to perform well in high school. High standards were set for the high school students, showing that the community wanted to ensure that their children were coming out with the best education possible.

The first school building was completed in 1890. Designed by architect John Tilton, it was done in the Richardson Romanesque style, interpreted as “rugged and powerful.”⁴⁸ At the end of the nineteenth century, the United States was still a country made up of immigrants. It had very little cultural or architectural history, which was sometimes a source of criticism by Europeans. Therefore, building projects often reflected the classic styles of Europe. This was done both to prove that it was possible for Americans to create something similar, but also to bring some familiarity and sense of home to America for the immigrants.

⁴⁷ Patrick Page, “The Early History of El Tee Hi (PLT 4),” 2.

⁴⁸ Frederick, 100.

LTHS itself initially resembled churches or town halls found in Europe – notable because both of those spaces are built as a place in which the community can gather, which was one of the purposes of the school. It sported a bell tower that was slightly clunky and compressed, and a rusticated arch over its main door. One of the most important features in classic architecture, like the Romanesque style, is ornamentation with a purpose. This ornamentation was found in the globe on the bell tower showing the Western Hemisphere. Those who saw it would have understood that it was meant to express the dominance of the West, and the progress that was coming to America. The first floor had an assembly room, two classrooms, the office, and the library. On the second floor was the principal's office and recitation rooms. Prominent Chicagoan businessman Marshall Field donated the bell for the bell tower, which is still a prized piece of LTHS history. Electricity was also soon introduced, in 1891.

In 1893, E.G. Cooley replaced H.W. Thurston as the principal of LTHS. He was a champion of trade and business training, expanding both of those fields.⁴⁹ He also worked to decrease the number of dropouts. A large emphasis on consistent attendance was made, with the rule becoming that if a student had three unexcused absences in four weeks, then they forfeited their seat at the school.⁵⁰ The school year was made up of ten-week quarters, with one week of spring vacation and no Christmas holiday. That same year, the school shortened courses in ancient Greek and German, added another year to the civics course, and changed the astronomy class to one on “Political Economy.”⁵¹ It can be inferred that the community wanted to produce young adults that would be prepared to be active citizens. Instead of learning classical languages, or perhaps the language of their parents, students would get more lessons in how to improve the democratic society they lived in.

⁴⁹ Cromie, 49.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ “Time Moves Back; Records Unfold Long History of School,” *The Lion*, October 18, 1962.

By 1895, the school was beginning to have space concerns. There were not enough rooms for the science classes students were interested in taking. The decision was made to renovate the bell tower and its adjoining attic space into

classrooms.⁵² Still, just four years later the school was ready to undergo an addition. In the 1899 to 1900 school year, there were 177 students enrolled, with nine faculty members.⁵³

In eleven years, the enrollment at LTHS had increased over four times its initial roster. The school was also preparing to accept the local eighth graders because of space concerns in

the grade schools.⁵⁴ This system would be in place from 1900 to 1915. The increased enrollment in both the high school and the grade schools showed the growing perceived importance of a good education, and one that went beyond grade school. Part of the hallway stretching south down Brainard Avenue was constructed in 1899. It had classrooms, a new assembly hall (Williams Hall), and an office suite.⁵⁵ The westwerk (a German word used to denote the grand entrance of a church) staircase would become the new main entrance for students, and the eastern side of the building quickly gained status as the most picturesque side.⁵⁶



Image 3: LTHS between 1910 and 1926. The westwerk staircase was located in the bumpout seen down on the left side of the building. Courtesy Alumni Association Archives.

It was also in 1899 that the process of buying Emmond Field across Cossitt Avenue was begun. In its infancy, the LTHS football team played on the “Congregational Lot,” probably associated with the First Congregational Church

⁵² Hays, chapter IV, page 6.

⁵³ Hays, chapter V, page 2.

⁵⁴ Cromie, 51.

⁵⁵ *Tabulae 1927* (La Grange, IL : Lyons Township High School, 1927), 95.

⁵⁶ Patrick Page, “The Early History of El Tee Hi (PLT 21), 2.

of La Grange.⁵⁷ The four acres at the corner of Brainard and Cossitt were placed up for sale for \$7,500. The land was bought through donations, subscriptions, and a contribution by the village.⁵⁸ However, conflicting evidence indicates that the land was perhaps leased until 1905. The swampy ground was once used as the La Grange Cricket Club, but soon got a renovation to fit the needs of the school.⁵⁹

Emmond Field became home to the school's football, baseball, and track teams. The oval track was seen as a new, modern way to practice the sport. A score board was added in 1929, and a public address system in 1937. The Marshall Field bell was rung every time a game was won. Today, the original gates to the field, donated by the local Freemasons, still stand in front of the Vaughan Building.

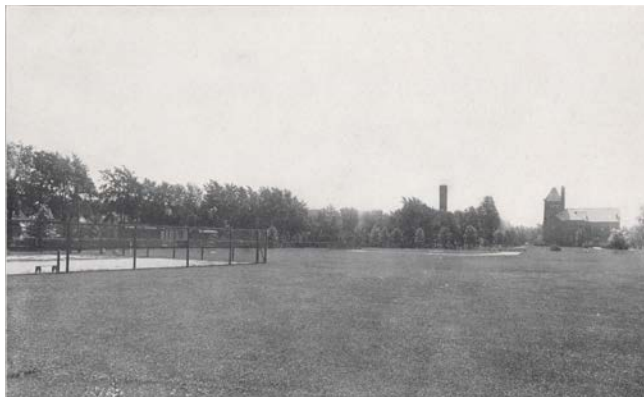


Image 4: The gates to Emmond Field, and a view of the school from the baseball diamond. Courtesy Alumni Association Archives.



⁵⁷ William Hastings, "Athletic Field Purchased Late in 1900; Mr. Emmond and Township Divide Cost," *The Lion*, September 24, 1929.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Hays, chapter IV, page 2.

In 1904, the school received its accreditation from the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.⁶⁰ This meant that the education provided by LTHS was enough to properly prepare its students for a college career, with little or no other requirements for students to apply. The citizens of the district had ensured that their children were receiving the best possible education that could



Image 5: The school band stands outside the original front entrance to the school in the early 1900s. Courtesy Alumni Association Archives.

as fire extinguishers.⁶¹

LTHS was again enlarged in 1910, this time to provide more gym and assembly space.⁶² Located beneath the current study hall room, the new gym boasted an upper level running track. In later years, this track was often used as overflow seating during games and events held there. Even with the new assembly space,

be provided, once again holding true to Cossitt's ideal of education. After the Iroquois Theatre fire in 1903 in downtown Chicago, changes were made to make the building safer from fire. This included the placement of fire hoses throughout the school, as well

⁶⁰ Hays, chapter VI, page 25.

⁶¹ Hays, chapter IV, page 7.

⁶² Ibid.

there was not enough room in the school for all the students to gather in at once. In 1911, the bell tower had to be finished out with four classrooms, and additional changing space was added to the girls' gym.⁶³ These additions were enough to sustain the student population for that year, but it was obvious that more classroom space was desperately needed. Enrollment was so high that there was talk of creating a second high school in the eastern section of the district. In the end, it was decided that the eighth graders would be returned to the grade schools after the 1914-1915 school year.⁶⁴ This relieved some of the stress on the classroom space.

After just ten years, Lyons Township was already an integral part of the community. Enrollment had quadrupled, and the building had been both altered and expanded to fit the growing population. Courses were beginning to be tailored to the desires of the communities, serving two different populations. Students could follow a traditional, humanities-style course, preparing them for lives of white collar careers or lives of leisure. Or, students could have an education that prepared them for more technical or agricultural occupations. Many of these offerings were thanks to Cooley and his support for classes that would appeal to and be useful for students who would be pursuing jobs that required a mechanical background. LTHS made a commitment to its students to provide an education that would support them no matter their place in life, and this was thanks to the support of the community. If the citizens of the district had not wanted to pay for certain educational tracks, like the humanities track or the manual training track, they would have refused to allow tax money go to those subjects. However, the fact that these courses were allowed to continue and grow shows that, regardless of the track taxpayers' children were in, locals were dedicated to providing a quality education to all the students of LTHS.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid, page 8.

The Great War

World War I brought some profound changes to LTHS. Never before had the world seen such a war, and the United States' involvement most definitely affected students both in school and at home. Many of the changes that LTHS experienced would appear unfamiliar and bizarre to modern students in the US, but they were seen as natural and needed to community members at the time.

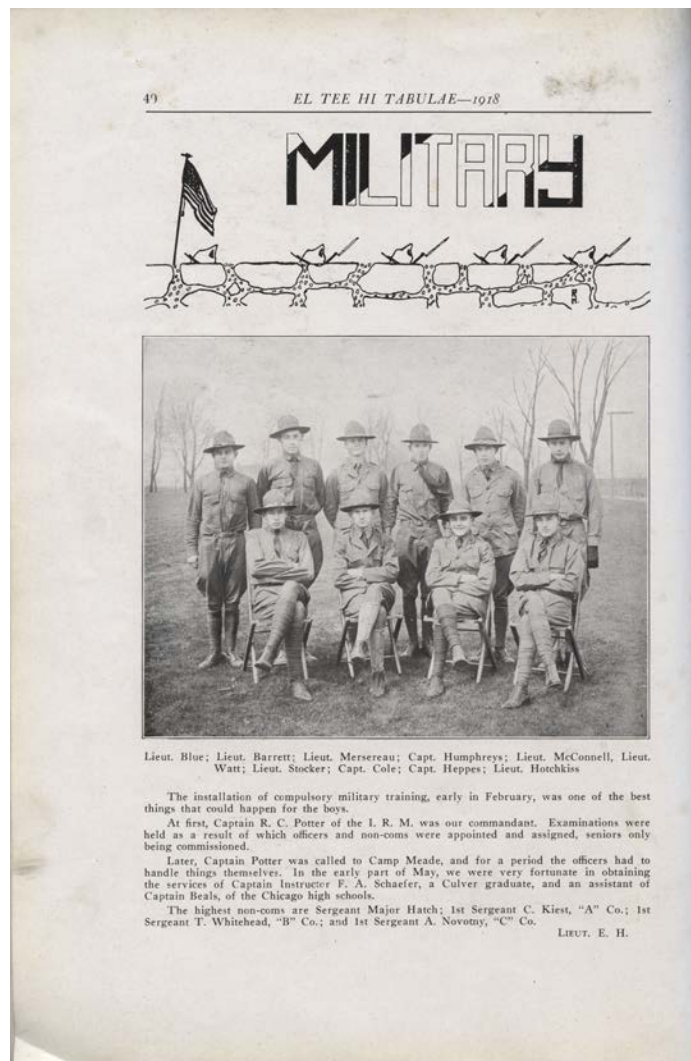


Image 6: A page from a 1918 yearbook in the Alumni Association Archives shows some of LTHS's war preparation.

One of the most major reactions to the war was the institution of compulsory military training for boys for the duration of the war. An Illinois National Guard member led the training until he was called to service in another location. The students continued their training on their own, until a replacement working in the Chicago Public Schools was found. That the young men decided to keep training even without the supervision of an adult shows their dedication to their nation in a time of war. It

supports the idea that the local community also felt strongly about the involvement of the country in World War I. Without the influence of the

community, it is unlikely that the program would have been implemented, let alone continued by the students without a leader.

Another notable show of support for the war effort during the Great War was the sale of government bonds, called Liberty Loans, by students at LTHS. It became a competition to see who could sell the most, both individually and as a grade. Freshman Whitwell Wales sold over 750 \$50 bonds, the school record. Bolstered by the efforts of their classmate, the freshman also sold the most bonds as a whole, just over 1000. All in all, students at LTHS sold 1618 bonds, which



Image 7: Candid pictures of LTHS alumni in the military from the 1918 yearbook in the Alumni Association Archives.

amounted to \$80,900. Adjusting for inflation, that is over \$1 million in today's money. The community surrounding LTHS was incredibly supportive of the students' efforts to raise money for the government's efforts. Additional fundraising efforts came with the school's sponsorship of military balls, raising money for the training of the school battalion.⁶⁵

One interesting aspect of the preparations in support of World War I was the removal of any books in German from the library. These books were not replaced until 1932.⁶⁶

Through the years, Chicago had had a proud German heritage. Many public

⁶⁵ *Tabulae 1918* (La Grange, IL: Lyons Township High School, 1918), 60.

⁶⁶ "German Books Used; Concealed for Years," *The Lion*, March 1, 1932.

schools in Chicago around the turn of the twentieth century taught German, either as a second language or to the exclusion of English.⁶⁷ LTHS itself had had German classes since almost the beginning of the school, but ceased offering them in the war years.⁶⁸ As late as 1928, 20% of the school's students had immigrant fathers, with German parentage making up the largest percentage. Obviously, there was a German presence within the community. To remove books from the library, whether they were in German or taught German, made a serious statement about how the community felt about the war and their enemies.

LTHS and the surrounding area did not soon forget the Great War. Over 100 alumni from LTHS served in the war. At least one was killed in action, although



Image 8: LTHS from Above in the 1925 yearbook. The image is taken looking northeast. Courtesy Alumni Association Archives.

a 1919 yearbook photograph shows a service flag with seven differentiated stars.⁶⁹ The school began a traditional Armistice Day remembrance, in which the entire school rose and faced east for one minute at

11:00.⁷⁰ Trees were planted along the east side of the school on Brainard to commemorate those who had died in World War I and in later wars as well.

⁶⁷ Encyclopedia of Chicago, s.v. "Bilingual Education," <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/137.html> (accessed February 15, 2015).

⁶⁸ Hays, chapter XI, page 3.

⁶⁹ *Tabulae 1919* (La Grange, IL: Lyons Township High School, 1919), 4.

⁷⁰ "All Students Observe Ninth Armistice Day," *The Lion*, November 16, 1926.

World War I had affected LTHS in ways beyond military preparations and support. Even before the war, the school was in need of an addition to support its growing student body. The decision was made by the community to hold off on that addition, in order to be able to devote more funds to supporting the war effort. By 1920, the district was so large that it had to essentially be split in half to lessen the number of students stressing the school building. In 1921, a small addition was constructed. At this point there were 680 students enrolled at LTHS, and the new portion of the school was supposed to raise its capacity to 1,000 students.⁷¹ The majority was a new hallway over the 1888 portion of the building, and an extension west to form a T shape. Included in this addition was the school's first cafeteria. There were 21 new classrooms and labs constructed, a boiler room and new boilers, as well as new coalbunkers. These classrooms were chemistry and physics laboratories, and spaces for the domestic science, art, and commercial departments. Eight classrooms were left unfinished until they were needed, but within five years, six of those were finished out.⁷² This indicates the fast rate at which the school was expanding.

⁷¹ Hays, chapter IV, page 9.

⁷² Ibid.

The 1928 Addition

The growth of the district continued at a rate that the school was not prepared for.



Image 9: The school building between 1921 and 1928. Courtesy Alumni Association Archives.

The 1921 addition was quickly not enough space for the burgeoning student population, and even as that expansion was being done, a later addition was being planned. A projected enrollment of 1,200 students had been increased to one of

2,500 to 3,000 students.⁷³ Space became such an issue that the school was told that they had to expand, or it would no longer be accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. The loss of this accreditation would have been a serious blow to the reputation of the school, and also indicated a serious problem in the education being offered to its students. The lack of space was such a concern that students were not receiving all the benefits of offered classes that they would in the proper facilities. Therefore, the decision was made to expand the school.

Local architect Joseph C. Llewellyn was chosen to design the addition. Llewellyn was highly involved in the local community, but his expertise in school design would have been enough to get him the job. He had also designed the 1921 addition, and was considered a leading figure in several regional and national architecture associations. He had served as president of the Chicago Architectural

⁷³ “Building to be Dedicated June 5: Building Offers Opportunities for Cultural and Educational Activities of School Growth,” *The Lion*, May 29, 1928.

Club, and as president of the Architectural League of America. Llewellyn spoke with notable architects such as Daniel Burnham, Louis Sullivan, and Frank Lloyd Wright.⁷⁴ He spent his career mainly designing schools, particularly high schools. All of the schools that he designed were public, as well – no private, trade, or vocational schools.⁷⁵ To him, this ensured that more children would have a beautiful space to learn in, even if they could not afford private school tuition. He also designed schools to have community space. This kept with the initial vision of LTHS, as a building that evoked parallels with a community space like a church or town hall.

Besides being a prominent Chicago architect, Llewellyn had ties to the LTHS community. His children all attended LTHS, and his son Ralph helped with the design and construction of the 1928 addition. For many years, Ralph lived just down the street from the school, on the 400th block of Blackstone. The Llewellyns were involved in their school community, and they eager to make the building into a space conducive to learning and gathering.



Image 10: An architect's rendering of the 1928 addition.
 Courtesy Alumni Association Archives.

The addition was begun in October of 1926.⁷⁶ Alternate architectural plans can be found in the archives of the Art Institute of Chicago, showing the importance of both the

⁷⁴ Mary E. Ottoson, *The Revival of a Master Architect: Joseph C. Llewellyn: Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science Historic Preservation*, Department of Historic Preservation, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 2009, 13 – 17.

⁷⁵ Ottoson, 14.

⁷⁶ “Work on New Addition to High School Commences,” *The Lion*, October 12, 1926.

architect and the plans.⁷⁷ They were considered notable enough to be saved for future reference and study in a major Chicago cultural institution. Built on a solid granite base, the new part of the building included a new administration suite, a gym, an auditorium, a community room, and a beautiful new bell tower as the entrance. It was done in a similar Romanesque style to the rest of the original building, but without rustication, which gave a more elegant and stately line. Natural light was important to Llewellyn, with a special window-filled room on the third floor being designated as the art room.⁷⁸ The building was completed in stages, with classroom shells being completed as needed, as was done with the smaller 1921 addition. A 1927 article in the school newspaper, the *Lion*, stated that eight out of the thirty constructed classrooms were finished or being finished, but just a year later that number was up to thirteen.⁷⁹ Again, this indicates how quickly the school's population was growing.

During the ceremony that dedicated the groundbreaking of new portion of the building, one student reflected that

“Our school will be one to be proud of. It will be an asset to the surrounding community. ... We will have a gymnasium where we can enjoy inviting other schools to meet in various competitions. We will have an auditorium where all our class plays and commencements can be held. We will have new, modern, well equipped class rooms where we can be taught to be good citizens in our community.”⁸⁰

This quote shows the importance of the addition to the community. There was a definite pride in sportsmanship, as indicated by the excitement about having a good space for competition. Students were eager to show their skills and try to lead their team to a clean victory. Both the students and the community were excited to begin using this new expansion for the benefit of everyone.

⁷⁷ J.C. Llewellyn and Associates records, 1894 – 1971. Chicago Commercial, Residential, and Landscape Architecture, Pre-World War II, Ryerson and Burnham Libraries, The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois.

⁷⁸ “Building to be Dedicated June 5th.”

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ “New Advantages,” *The Lion*, October 19th, 1926.

Llewellyn made a serious effort to develop a building that would truly benefit both of those groups. He stated in an interview for the *Lion* in May of 1928 “that



Image 11: The gym of the new 1928 addition.
Courtesy Alumni Association Archives.

it is the desire of the men who made the plans for our new building to see it used by the public at large.”⁸¹ In the same interview, he mentioned that “the auditorium, foyer, and community room gives a unit not surpassed by many others in the state for community

purposes.” He had specifically designed the addition with the dual

purpose of fitting the needs of both the students and the local population.

The new gymnasium was to be for the boys, with the old one becoming the space for the girls’ physical education classes. There was seating for 1,200 spectators, but on the day of the space’s dedication, over 1,500 people had jammed into it. It was the first part of the addition ready for public use.⁸² There was a new elevated running track, 20 laps to the mile. This was a welcome improvement from the previous gym, which had been 27 laps to the mile. The floor could be divided to allow for two basketball games to go on at once. Large shower facilities were added, and locker rooms could provide storage space for uniforms of a thousand athletes at a time. There was also space for coaches’ offices, as well a corrective gym for things like conditioning work.⁸³

⁸¹ “Building to be Dedicated June 5”

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ *Tabulae* 1927 (La Grange, IL: Lyons Township High School), 94.

A 1927 article in the *Lion* said that the gym “[ranked] with the best prep school gyms in the country and with the gyms of many small colleges.” Members of the Board of Education joined community members, including those from local churches and welfare organizations, and even the commissioner of Big Ten Athletics to dedicate the gym in

1928.⁸⁴ This gym became the girl’s gym when the Vaughan Building

across Cossitt was constructed in the 1950s, and then became the library in the early 1970s.



Image 12: The completed auditorium in 1928. Courtesy Alumni Association Archives.

The auditorium was finished in time for the Class of 1928’s graduation to take place within.⁸⁵ Seating for just over 1,800 allowed for plenty of room for school and community events. There was a 25 foot wide stage, and a state of the art lighting system. There was an orchestra pit, organ space, and dressing room to provide ample resources for any production or event taking place. The auditorium even claimed to boast perfect acoustics.⁸⁶ Administrators had the foresight to set aside money for the purchase of projectors for “moving pictures.” In an act of school spirit, the pillars and arch of the stage were painted gold and blue, the school colors.⁸⁷ The space was used by over 110,000 people in the first year of its existence, as calculated by the school’s principal combining both

⁸⁴ “Dedication of the Gym: Speeches, ‘L’ Club Dance, and Victory in Morgan Park Game Dedicate New Gym Friday Night,” *The Lion*, January 10, 1928.

⁸⁵ “Auditorium Offers Many Opportunities,” *The Lion*, May 29, 1928.

⁸⁶ “F.K. Vial Reports Progress of New High School Building,” *The Lion*, February 15, 1927.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

school and community events.⁸⁸ In the 1970s, the auditorium was rededicated as the Reber Center, in honor of Superintendent Donald Reber.



Image 13: The Community Room of the 1928 addition. Courtesy Alumni Association Archives.

The Community Room across the hall from the auditorium provided a smaller event space than the auditorium. It could seat 200, and had a small stage. The

Class of 1927 gave the gift of a grand piano to be used for performances and events. The room had oak wainscot, a beamed ceiling, and specially decorated walls with the hardware to hang and display paintings.⁸⁹ This room presented a beautiful and refined face to the local population, who often gathered there for meetings, receptions, and exhibitions. In later years, the stage was replaced by a small kitchen, first used by the Home Ec

Club, and now by the Chefs classes for events.



Image 14: The hallway between the auditorium and the Community Room after the installation of the frieze panels in 1928. Courtesy Alumni Association Archives.

The idea of the auditorium and the Community Room as gathering spaces for everyone was reflected in the decoration of the hallways between the two locations.

Llewellyn himself donated the art for this hall, casts of the friezes on the east wall of the Parthenon in

Athens. The friezes he chose are significant in and of themselves. The Parthenon's friezes encompass all four interior walls of the temple. They tell the

⁸⁸ "Valued at Million: Attendance at New Auditorium 110,000 Last Year – Legion Contributes Many, (Clipping from unidentified newspaper article), August 8, 1929.

⁸⁹ "Auditorium Offers Many Opportunities."

story of the annual procession honoring Athena. At the point in the narrative on the eastern wall, the community is all coming together to celebrate. Those in the procession are not separated by class or gender, but rather a single, unified group. This reflects the values of LTHS, which educated students of both genders from its inception, and quickly adapted to serve students of varying career paths. Llewellyn wanted the auditorium and Community Room to act as a place for the community to gather, much like what is happening on the panels displayed between the two rooms in the school. The inclusion of a piece of what is regarded as one of western art's greatest treasures also shows how important it was to Llewellyn and school officials to enlighten their students in addition to educating them. Lastly, the trophy case in the same hallway displayed a real pride in the accomplishments of the students.

One of the features of the 1928 addition is now the architectural aspect most



Image 15: The building after the 1928 addition was completed. Courtesy Alumni Association Archives.

identified with LTHS. While the original 1888 school building did have a bell tower, Llewellyn incorporated an entirely new one into his design. Located on the north end of the building, it stood above a grand foyer that would now become the entrance most used by the public for events in the school. Four bells hang in

the tower, and an illuminated clock sits another story above. While the school board paid for the clock, the Masons purchased the bells. The bells are large, weighing in at 400, 550, 750, and 1,800 pounds. The largest one has a poem engraved on it. Additionally, the bell from the original building sits outside the bell tower enclosure, directly above the doors. This bell is rung today at graduation, once for each new alumnus.

The 1928 addition quickly began to fulfill its role as a space for the community to gather. One major example of this is in the Sunday Evening Club, which held meetings for over twenty years on winter nights in the auditorium. It was sponsored by the local American Legion, and boasted 458 meetings with 563,887 total attendees, an average of 1,231 per meeting.⁹⁰ It was started in 1927 by Marshall L. Matthews, after a debate on whether or not movies should be shown on Sundays made him realize that there was really not a lot to do on those evenings. There were two church services, both of which were poorly attended, and few radio shows to which people would listen. Therefore, the decision was made to start a series of presentations or talks that the local community could attend to better themselves.

The Sunday Evening Club was a community endeavor, financed through memberships and donations. Initially, meetings were held at the La Grange Theatre, but then moved to the school auditorium when it was finished. The presentations were a way for people to learn more about the world before modern technology provided easy opportunity to do so. The people who spoke were often highly involved in creating that technology, which shows the status of this local speaker series. The first-ever speaker was General Charles G. Dawes, the sitting vice president under Calvin Coolidge; attracting a presenter of that caliber shows the influence of that group.

The quality of those who spoke or performed at the meetings would remain at a high level throughout the lifespan of the Sunday Evening Club. Many of those who presented on Sunday evenings were cultural icons. Amelia Earhart was an early speaker, and was scheduled to come back. Unfortunately, her ill-fated around-the-world trip interfered with those plans. Many of those who presented on Sunday evenings were cultural icons. The American adventuring couple

⁹⁰ Programs of the Sunday Evening Club, Organizations, 1927 – 1977. Alumni Association Archives, Lyons Township High School, La Grange, Illinois.

Martin and Osa Johnson came several times to give slideshows on their trips through Africa. A touring Chinese theatre group also came, which was sponsored by Pearl S. Buck. These are examples of how people who attended these meetings could learn more about the world they lived in.

Musical performers came to the auditorium through the Saturday Evening Club as well. The Von Trapp Family Singers, perhaps best known today through *The Sound of Music*, appeared several times. The Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Choir came out from Chicago to perform. In later years, that group has been hailed as the founder of modern gospel music. Later performers included the Smothers Brothers and Count Basie. The Sunday Evening Club attracted cultural and political icons throughout its history until its discontinuation after World War II. It was at this point that entertainers and speakers became too expensive, and the growth of radio and television became a big competitor for attention.⁹¹

While the purpose of the 1928 addition to the school building was to give additional space for the students and teachers, a large secondary purpose of the architect was to create an environment in which the community could gather. It was for this reason that Llewellyn put such an effort into the auditorium and the Community Room. His efforts were not in vain. The auditorium and Community Room were and continue to be important parts of both school and local life.

⁹¹ Programs of the Sunday Evening Club.

The Junior College and The Great Depression

Another exciting addition to LTHS in 1928 had nothing to do with architecture or construction. That was the year in which the Lyons Township Junior College, also known as the LTJC or JC, was created. The school's principle, Dr. George Willett, had come to LTHS from Minnesota. There, he had created a junior college for his district.⁹² There was a desire within the La Grange community for education past the high school level, that perhaps was closer to home than other universities, or less expensive. Additionally, many students graduating from the high school were young: the class of 1929 had 17% of its students as under 16 years of age, and 60% under 18.⁹³ The LTJC was the sixth junior college in Illinois, and one of the 146 in existence in the US in the fall of 1928.⁹⁴ The school would add no more to the taxes of the district, and would use some of the space created by the 1928 addition.

A unanimous vote by the Board of Education created the LTJC on March 11, 1929. It would have the same entrance requirements as the University of Illinois, and follow their course program of the first two years of study.⁹⁵ The Junior College opened in the fall of 1929 with ten students; ten years later, the JC was educating 234 students.⁹⁶

For many years, the LTJC was located on the third floor of the North Campus. In 1930, one classroom was finished to be the library, with books coming from former superintendent Edwin G. Cooley's personal collection. Both this expense and the consistently good attendance during the Great Depression show the

⁹² Patrick Page, "The Early History of El Tee Hi (PLT 27)," 1.

⁹³ "L.T.H.S. May Have Junior College in Near Future If Villages See Need: Board of Education Points Out Advantages Of Such a Plan; Dr. Willett Speaks Before P.T.A. On Subject," *The Lion*, January 22, 1929.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ "Vote To Establish Junior College: Board Passes Resolution Authorizing Opening of Junior College, September, 1929," *The Lion*, March 12, 1929.

⁹⁶ "J.C. Enrollment," *The Lion*, September 15, 1938.

commitment of the area to education. Even when times were tough, parents were willing to find a way to send their children somewhere where they could work towards a better future.

The Great Depression hit the La Grange area hard, as it did throughout the United States. LTHS had to make rather significant alterations to its budget in order to stay in operation. Beginning in August 1931, banks began to refuse to cash teachers' orders, or any anticipation warrants issued by the school.⁹⁷ After October of that same year, teachers were not paid in cash until at least March of 1932, except for a \$100 Christmas check.⁹⁸ Even in 1934, the school had not received its share of the property taxes of community members from 1932.⁹⁹

LTHS made many cuts through the Depression. In the 1932 – 1933 school year, the students saw fewer teachers, less gym time, and cafeteria reductions. Teachers received a salary reduction.¹⁰⁰ In the spring of 1932, the decision was made to shift from weekly to monthly assemblies for the student body. The budget in the fall of 1932 was so tight, however, that assemblies were canceled altogether. The next semester, the administration began to allow students to produce their own assemblies.¹⁰¹ The alternative instruction in the sort of cultural items that might be presented at an assembly, or the benefits the students would get from performing for their peers was of a great deal of importance to the school's leaders. More services were cut after the initial slash in 1932. Cafeteria service on the whole was eliminated at one point. The home economics department lost some of their cooking classes, and there was also a reduction in library services and the manual training department.¹⁰²

⁹⁷ Hays, chapter X, page 9.

⁹⁸ "Good Sports," *The Lion*, March 15, 1932.

⁹⁹ Hays, chapter X, page 10.

¹⁰⁰ "Good Sports."

¹⁰¹ "No Assemblies to be Held This Semester," *The Lion*, September 20, 1933.

¹⁰² "Good Sports."

An article in the school's newspaper reveals the desperate situation faced by the school. A student wrote that

“There isn't a whole lot that can be done. The school board, composed of the finest type of men, is doing its best to relieve the situation. We, of the student body, however, can urge our parents to pay their 1930 taxes, and, if possible, to purchase teachers warrants which are an excellent 6% investment. ... If we ever become rich we can hope we can establish a fund that will insure against teaching without pay.”¹⁰³

The area was feeling the effects of the economic crisis so severely that even young students at the high school were noticing it. However, instead of being worried about their own lives, they took into consideration the sacrifices being made for their education. This displays an awareness of current events, and a sense of community obligation and empathy.

The 1930s saw the development of several traditions still present at LTHS today. The most notable of these is the homecoming football game. The first homecoming game was actually played in 1926. In the true spirit of community, the game was later replayed on the movie screen of the 1700-person La Grange Theatre, and an alumni dance took place at the town hall.¹⁰⁴ It was in the 1930s that homecoming really began to take off. The first parade ran through the village in 1931. By 1934, local car dealers were allowing their wares to be borrowed by students and alumni to be used in the parade.¹⁰⁵ A bonfire and a “snake dance” in which students joined hands and traveled the several blocks to the La Grange Theatre started in 1936. 1937 saw the first homecoming dance for students, in the community room and bell tower foyer created in the 1928 addition.¹⁰⁶

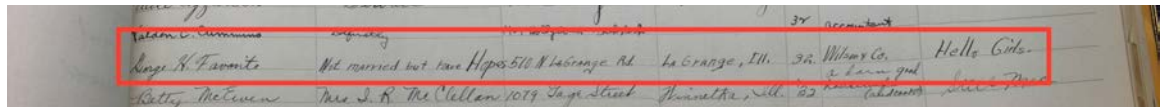
¹⁰³ “Good Sports.”

¹⁰⁴ “La Grange Homecoming,” *The Lion*, October 26, 1926.

¹⁰⁵ “L.T.H.S. Homecoming Saturday,” *The Lion*, October 25, 1936.

¹⁰⁶ “Swing it Rag!,” *The Lion*, October 28, 1937.

One of the most exciting early homecomings was in 1938, for the fiftieth anniversary of the school. Alumni came from across the nation and the world, with invitations apparently having been sent out as far as China. The administration placed out a “Golden Book” for alumni to sign. Over 1,280 current and former students wrote their names (and change of name for married women), addresses, and occupations into the book. One cheeky alumnus used his section to search out a wife for himself: George H. Favorite displayed a real charm in his entry, stating that he was “not married but [had] hopes,” leaving the additional note of “Hello Girls.”¹⁰⁷



The 1930s also saw the beginnings of an enduring adult education program at LTHS. Two courses of university extension lectures previously had been offered in the 1892-1893 school year, and in 1900, there were 71 people enrolled in evening classes. The most popular classes throughout the early decades were bookkeeping and mechanical drawing, both of which could be used to achieve greater success in a given career. However, there were also those looking to perhaps finish a high school diploma, or simply continue their education, as civics, economics, English, French, and science classes were also popular. The evening school begun in 1933 has continued almost uninterrupted in one form or another from its inception. That year it registered 67 students in accounting, stenography, college English and psychology classes, and high school social sciences. Again, some students were looking to further their career prospects, but some were there to work towards a degree. The school was eager to provide a space in which community members could keep learning even after their traditional schooling years.

¹⁰⁷ Golden Book, History, 1938. Alumni Association Archives, Lyons Township High School, La Grange, Illinois.

World War II

On December 8th, 1941, the students and faculty of LTHS gathered in their auditorium to listen to the radio broadcast of President Roosevelt's declaration of war on Imperial Japan.¹⁰⁸ Hours later, Japan's allies Germany and Italy would declare war on the United States in return. It would have been understood that the lives of all Americans, including the students at LTHS, would be altered dramatically. What those students may not have realized that day, however, was how invested their school was about to become in the war effort.

The La Grange area would quickly be enveloped in war commerce. An editorial in the school paper asked students to encourage their parents to support the war efforts.¹⁰⁹ People in the area had traditionally been opposed to the policies of Franklin D. Roosevelt, but the industries that many of them worked in would be vital to war preparations and supplies. General Motors, for example, owned the Electro-Motive Corporation in neighboring McCook, building diesel engines for locomotives. During the war, their factory would instead build engines for naval ships.

Students also got involved within the school to support the war and soldiers. For example, different groups at LTHS built model airplanes for both students and civilians to study, so that sky-watching locals could identify foreign planes if necessary.¹¹⁰ The administration introduced a host of new classes to prepare students for a future in the military or in a related field.¹¹¹ Home Nursing and First Aid was now a required class for

¹⁰⁸ "War Proclamation Heard in Assembly By Serious Students and Faculty," *The Lion*, December 12, 1941.

¹⁰⁹ "Voice of the Student: War Comes to America," *The Lion*, December 12, 1941.

¹¹⁰ "It's Your Job," *The Lion*, March 6, 1942.

¹¹¹ "El Tee Mobilizes [sic] for War on the Home Front," *The Lion*, January 29, 1943.

all junior and senior girls. The sewing classes began to incorporate sewing skills laid out by the Red Cross, and new classes in nutrition showed students how to best maintain their health. Male students took a new class in aeronautical physics. Some math courses were introduced or redesigned to emphasize lessons and skills that would be useful in a military career. Social Studies classes were rewritten to educate on post-war problems, so that graduates of LTHS would be able to assist in rebuilding efforts. Additionally, gym classes increased in frequency, with more teachers being hired to help students learn calisthenics, running, wrestling, and boxing. Summer courses allowed senior boys to graduate a semester early and enter into service.

Various clubs and activities within LTHS also supported the military and World War II. There was an entire club dedicated to the war effort, in fact – the War Commission. One of the main activities was the selling of war stamps and bonds throughout the local community. With these profits, the students helped the government buy supplies for the military. Records were sent to the school of the specific items that their funds went to, which included Jeeps, a tank, a landing barge, and a plane aptly named the Flyin’ Lion after the school’s mascot, a lion.¹¹²

The War Commission club averaged \$2500 in sales of bonds and stamps a week, with money also coming in from fundraisers like dances and a dog show. The Military Club was a large part of the war culture at LTHS, as well. Its purpose was to train boys for their entrance into the service, by providing one hour of lecture instruction and one hour of military drill per week. This parallels the military training provided by the school in World War I, but with the addition of the lecture. LTHS felt a strong pull to educate its male students for combat in times of war.

¹¹² “The Flyin’ Lion,” *The Lion*, June 1, 1944.

Air raid drills were an important occurrence at LTHS during the war. Administrators were worried that from the air, the school might look like an industrial plant.¹¹³ This was a reasonable fear, based off both the appearance of the school and the sheer number of actual plants in the area. A routine was quickly developed when the siren went off. Students would take shelter in the hallways, similar to modern tornado drills. The custodians would run around the school, turning off the gas to avoid any chain explosions, and let the steam out of the boilers for the same reason. Steps were also taken to protect the roof and the attic.

All the efforts that LTHS made for preparing its students for a military career paid off. In 1945, there was an estimated 2,000 alumni in the various military branches.¹¹⁴ 41% of those alumni were in the Navy, with half of those sailors in regular service and the rest in the Navy Air Corps or in the V-12 Navy College Training Program, which educated college students to allow them to become commissioned officers. 4% of those alumni served in the Marines and in the Marine Air Corps. The various Air Corps proved to be a popular field for LTHS graduates, with over half of those serving in the Army joining that division. The next most popular division of the Army for alumni was the medics, then the Signal Corps, Engineers, Army Ordinance, Transport Command, Ski Troops, Parachute Troops, and the infantry. One alumnus even served as a War Correspondent. There was also a fair number of alumni in the Coast Guard and the Merchant Marines.

Ten percent of the alumni in service were commissioned officers: ensigns, lieutenants, and lieutenant commanders in the Navy, and second and first lieutenants, captains, flight officers, majors, lieutenant colonels, and colonels in the Army. Graduates from after 1940 held more commissioned positions than

¹¹³ "War Defense Industries Necessitate Aid Raid Drills," *The Lion*, January 29, 1943.

¹¹⁴ "Navy Takes 41% of L.T.'s Servicemen, Marines 4%; 1944 Seems to Lead Number of Grads in War," *The Lion*, June 13, 1945.

their pre-1940 counterparts.¹¹⁵ The class of 1944 boasted the most servicemen, with '39, '43, '42, '37, and '41 following. All classes since 1927 were represented. About 20% of the 2,000 alumni served overseas, with twice as many of them serving in Europe than in the Pacific before V-E Day (Victory in Europe). At least nine alumni were returned after time as prisoners of war. Women graduates also played a role in the service, with representatives in WAVES (Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service, a division of the Navy), WACS (the Women's Army Corps), the Marines, and both the Army and Navy Nurse Corps. Most of the women served in hospitals in the US, and half of them were commissioned lieutenants.

LTHS's involvement in the war effort involved the community, as well. Students grew a victory garden in neighboring La Grange Park to alleviate some of the pressures on farmers as they tried to produce enough food to ship overseas. They also helped local farmers because of the labor shortage.¹¹⁶ Girls also found jobs in offices to replace adults who had been redirected into jobs more directly related to the war. One of the major contributions LTHS made to the community during World War II was its role as a war-training center for the University of Illinois.¹¹⁷ Of the 45 university extensions created for the war, LTHS's was commonly regarded as one of the best.¹¹⁸

Through LTHS, the University offered free courses in engineering, war-training management, radio, cost accounting and standards, circuits, analytical chemistry, drafting, metallurgy, safety engineering, applied mechanics, and time and motion study. The goal was to train attendees well enough for them to replace the engineers being drafted into service. The estimate was that eighteen engineers

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ "El Tee Students Turn to Victory Gardens; 60 Boys Help Detassel Corn," *The Lion*, January 29, 1943.

¹¹⁷ "War-Training School Offers 21 Courses Second Semester," *The Lion*, January 29, 1943.

¹¹⁸ "L. T. Active Center for War Training; Free Courses Given by Night School Training Men and Women for War Industry," *The Lion*, January 29, 1943.

were needed to support one soldier on the front, showing the incredible importance of this program. To achieve this ratio, the US sank \$30 million into the university extension program across the country in an effort to keep the classes free.¹¹⁹ The project was a success: LTHS alone trained 2,000 workers in 84 classes over the three years of its existence.

Even after the war ended, LTHS's support of its causes did not. One of the most notable examples of this was the school's sponsorship of a sister school in Germany. They wrote letters, sent pictures, music, and newspapers, and generally tried to give German students an idea of life in the US. Interestingly, the US forces in Austria wrote to LTHS to give specific instructions on what could and could not be mentioned in their correspondence with the school.¹²⁰ The emphasis at LTHS in regards to World War II went to a focus on brotherhood. The traditional spring fundraiser of Bow Day, in which hair bows were sold to girls to mark the beginning of the new season, raised money to send to war orphans in 1947. The War Commission renamed itself the Post-War Council, and continued its sale of war stamps and bonds, adding in participation in Red Cross activities and the maintenance of the school service records.

While World War I may have been the first international total war that the US participated in, World War II saw the immersion of the US into a total war on a new level. LTHS resumed the military training it had offered in 1917 and 1918, but now with the addition of supplementary educational courses. The administration saw the preparation of students for military service in various capacities as a serious responsibility. The community supported these endeavors, through their purchasing of war bonds and stamps, for example. Additionally, the use of LTHS as a University of Illinois extension is another situation in which the school interacted with the community in a totally new sense. It expanded its

¹¹⁹ "LT Active Center for War Training Industry."

¹²⁰ "Vienna Thanks LTHS for Parcels; U.S. Official Warns Against Sending Wrong Kind of Letters," *The Lion*, October 1, 1947.

teaching capacity beyond the teens of the area, ready to educate the community at large.

Post-War to Present

The post-war years dramatically changed the face of LTHS. From the baby boom to the mid-1990s student population decline, between the expansion process and construction decisions, Lyons Township has hardly remained a static entity.

West Field and the Vaughan Building were two of the first post-war additions to the LTHS landscape. West Field was constructed from 1948 to 1949 to replace some of the space being lost to the Vaughan Building.¹²¹ Located less than half a mile from North Campus, West Field has several soccer fields and a gravel running track. It is used as a supplemental space for gym classes, which often spend their first and last two units of the year outdoors there. Additionally, it is home to many soccer games for the school teams. It is also often made available to local elementary and middle schools for their own team practices, as well as for fundraisers and tournaments. It acts as a functional space for both the school and the community.

Once again, space was becoming a concern for the administration of LTHS in the 1950s. The baby boom had begun, and the first wave of those children was approaching high school. In order to make room for all the incoming students, a second campus was constructed. Land was purchased in the neighboring village of Western Springs, approximately one mile from the original campus. South Campus, as it was termed, was the new home for the freshman and sophomore students. The decision was made to build an underclassman campus instead of splitting the district for cost reasons. It would cost less to build another campus because all the facilities would not have to be replicated. For example, this campus was not constructed with a pool, a smaller theatre seemed sufficient, and athletic spaces were shared with North Campus. Construction was completed in 1956, with the class of 1960 being the first to walk its halls.

¹²¹ “West Athletic Field Improved,” *The Lion*, September 29, 1948.

Additional space was also purchased about this time further down Willow Springs Road, the same street that South Campus is located on. There was concern that the additional space created by the second campus would still not be enough for the baby boomers reaching college age. This undeveloped location, located at about 71st Street and Willow Springs Road, is still in the possession of the school.

One of the most important community gathering spaces for LTHS today was created at this time. Until 1966, home football games were played across the street from North Campus, on Emmond Field. However, the Vaughan Building was becoming too small for all the physical education classes taking place. Therefore, the 1967-1968 school year saw construction begin on an extension to the building. A fieldhouse large enough to seat the entire school went up, as well as a swimming pool and several new gyms. The field purchased at the turn of the century was soon covered in brick and concrete, necessitating a new location for football games. A field north of South Campus was deemed suitable. The six acres had been acquired by the school in 1964.

It was also in 1966 that the football coach of over two decades, Chuck Bennett, was forced to retire early due to a stroke. As one of the winningest coaches in LTHS football history, the school administration named the field for him.¹²² It was dedicated in 1967, but Bennett was unable to make the ceremony because of complications from his stroke. To allow him to hear both the ceremony and the following game (which his football team won), an audio hook-up in his home was supplied.¹²³ In a continuation of the tradition of recognizing the sacrifices of LTHS alumni in times of war, the American Legion purchased a flagpole to be erected in honor of those who died in the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Bennett Field is still the home of the Lions today, with football games occurring on warm nights in the fall under the lights. The soccer and lacrosse teams often play on the

¹²² “Bennett Field Dedication Featured at Proviso Game,” *The Lion*, September 26, 1968.

¹²³ “Villagers, School Gather to Lionize Mr. Bennett,” *The Lion*, November 10, 1968.

field as well, and the marching band practices several times a week. Much like West Field, Bennett Field is used by gym classes at South and local elementary and middle schools for sports practices and competitions. One of the most notable community events takes place each year in early summer. The school sponsors a Relay for Life event, in which teams raise money and walk the rubber track continuously through the night to raise money for cancer research.

Even with the addition of South Campus, LTHS was still facing space concerns. School administrators began to think about the role of the Junior College. The JC was still holding classes on the third floor, with space for their yearbook and paper in the bell tower. The JC acted almost as an early Advanced Placement program, with high school students having the ability to take classes through the JC if they felt they were more suited to that difficulty level. Many LTHS seniors went onto the JC for two years before entering the workforce or a four-year college: in 1956, 89 out of the 362 seniors interviewed said that this was their plan.¹²⁴

By the late 1950s, the JC had more students than its space could support. Additionally, LTHS's own population was becoming more unmanageable in its own classrooms. LTHS's enrollment in the 1962-1963 school year broke 4,000 for the first time.¹²⁵ The administrators began to involve themselves in conversations with local high schools, including Elmwood Park, Leyden Township, Oak Park-River Forest, Proviso Township, and Riverside-Brookfield about creating an area junior college. This conversation became even more serious in 1965, when the Illinois House Bill 1710 passed. This created two classes of junior colleges, and the LTJC fell into the second tier. At this time, there was a push to make more regional junior colleges, as opposed to ones that served only a small specific area. As a result of its secondary status, the JC could

¹²⁴ "Last Year's Graduates Follow Education Trend," *The Lion*, January 24, 1957.

¹²⁵ "Enrollment Passes 4,000," *The Lion*, September 20, 1962,

not have a board of education, and neither taxing nor bonding powers. Perhaps the harshest blow was that it lost its state funding.¹²⁶

After House Bill 1710 passed, a referendum was held to vote on removing the JC from LTHS. A flurry of activity commenced, with each side passing leaflets and brochures on why to vote their way. Those who wanted a split saw a decisive victory on the fourth of February, 1967, winning 1,974 votes to 253. In 1967, Lyons Township Junior College officially merged with the new College of DuPage in Glen Ellyn, Illinois 10 miles west of La Grange.¹²⁷ The 1967-1968 school year was the last year of the JC in LTHS, as it finished its life as a satellite campus for College of DuPage. College of DuPage has historically been one of the top providers of post-secondary education for LTHS alumni, many of whom are unaware of its historical ties to their alma mater.

1967 also brought a bond issue for the school. With this money, the school was able to create the aforementioned Bennett Field and field house and gyms at North Campus. Because the girls were able to have gym space in the Vaughan Building extension, their gym in the main building was turned into a library. Additionally, the back wall of the auditorium at North was bumped out to make a shop. The theatre's poor electrical system and crumbling interior needed repairs, but building funds for those causes were not passed. Instead, renovations began in the fall of 1972, and gave the theatre an entirely new look. It was rededicated in 1974 and named for Superintendent Donald Reber. Today, the Reber Center is once again undergoing a facelift and being updated.

One of the most major institutions of LTHS from the 1940s to the 1960s was the student union, the Corral. Founded in 1943, this student organization quickly became the largest in the US, and was nationally recognized for its programs and

¹²⁶ "JC Future Depends on Reaction Petition Arouses in Community," *The Lion*, November 10, 1966.

¹²⁷ "School Opens Doors: DuPage College Enters Lyons," *The Lion*, November 2, 1967.

role in the community. The Corral began in an old garage in the center of La Grange, completely owned and operated by students of LTHS. The students organized themselves and raised the money to buy the location and make some renovations on it. The knotty-pine interior and rustic feel led to its naming as the Corral. The original location on West Harris Street remained in the possession of the Lyons Township Youth Organization, Inc., until 1957.¹²⁸ The Corral was run by a student Board of Directors with a faculty advisor. It sponsored dances and activities each weekend, with additional opportunities to spend time there over breaks. It was even popular with students from other high schools, forcing it to limit its attendance to only LTHS students on some nights. The youth organization was featured in magazines and newspapers across the country praising its role in ensuring that the teens of the area had a safe and chaperoned environment in which to spend free time. In 1956, its large membership of 1,700 students forced the organization to look for a new home. It was decided that it would relocate to a lot just south of the new South Campus being built.

The Corral was funded entirely independently of the school. It raised money through the sale of memberships, and through tickets to its yearly variety or student-written play, the Corral Show. Some of the local bands and performers who appeared at the Corral later went on to have massive careers: Styx, Chicago and Muddy Waters all played at the Corral, and David Hasselhoff, an LTHS graduate, performed in several Corral Shows.¹²⁹ Strict behavioral standards were set, like the interdiction of drinking, smoking, and fighting. However, by the late 1970s, the Corral was in decline. Students were no longer interested in spending time at the Corral, and the building was in need of some repairs. It was sold to LTHS at the end of that decade, and sat empty for over ten years until a portion of it was converted into an alternative school in 1993.¹³⁰ It has since been

¹²⁸ “The Corral Story,” 2.

¹²⁹ “Corral’ Student Center Re-Opening Plan,” 1.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

refurbished so that the majority of the space can once again be used as an after-school hangout, a performance venue, and a dance location.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, LTHS maintained an excellent reputation. A 1966 article in the *Chicago Daily News* sang the praises of the school. That year, the senior class had 30 National Merit Scholarship Finalists, the most in Illinois. The average class size that year was 19, especially impressive for a school with over 4,000 students. Two-thirds of the teachers had their master's degree, with the average length of teaching experience being eleven years. The students were well prepared for college, to which 74% of students proceeded. It was found that in general, their grades in college were equal to their grades in high school. LTHS was also achieving well athletically. Between 1944 and 1966, the school had won the President's Cup for all around athletic achievement in their conference twenty times.¹³¹

LTHS's student population peaked in the 1972-1973 school year, at over 5,000. After this, the school began a slow decline, until the population dropped so low in the early nineties that there was talk of closing one campus or splitting the district. However, enrollment has steadily risen since that time. Today's graduating classes hover around 1,000 students.

The high school continues to be a staple presence in the community. The evening school started in 1933 has appeared in various formats off and on since then. However, the adult education program in its current form dates from the mid-1960s. Close to two hundred classes are currently offered each semester, from GED courses to fiction writing to computer skills to car care.

¹³¹ "Lyons High Tops in Students," *Chicago Daily News*, May 25, 1966.

The Creation of an Archives

Terminology

To understand a discussion of the archival process and its importance, it may be useful to have an understanding of the basic terminology.¹³² Archives are permanently valuable records that have been received and/or accumulated by formal organizations in the process of daily business. In this case, the formal organization is Lyons Township High School. Manuscripts are the valuable records created, received, assembled, or collected by people and families as they went about their daily lives.

Provenance is the concept of a relationship between records and those who created them. Essentially, it is how the records came into being, or their origin. A survey is a systematic look at the records and papers in the archives to gain information on what is missing. Records that show the origins or main purpose of a creator have evidential value. Substantive records show that evidential value, while facilitative records involve information that supported the main activities of a creator.¹³³

¹³² Kathleen D. Roe, "Arranging & Describing Archives & Manuscripts," Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005.

¹³³ Ibid.

Related Literature

There is little in the professional archives literature about creating an archive for a high school, and about building an archive with high school students. First, the idea of an archive for a high school is not widespread. Colleges and universities very frequently have them, but the maintenance of the history of a high school is not usually a priority. This could be due to various reasons, including a lack of interest or small school budgets. Additionally, high schools may not always have a long history to preserve. LTHS is unique in the fact that it has been continually educating students for over a century and a quarter. LTHS's district has always been large, too, which has increased its population and services offered.

William R. Fernekes and Harlene Z. Rosenberg shared their experiences establishing an archives at a high school in New Jersey.¹³⁴ Hunterdon Central Regional High School (HCRHS), in Flemington, New Jersey, began to build an archive in 2002. The school was approaching its fiftieth anniversary, and the community saw an archive as a fitting introduction to preserve the past of the school. The article followed the process of the archive's creation and its role in the school community.

Despite many differences between the situations at HCRHS and LTHS, this article provided valuable insight into the process of establishing a secondary school's archives. The first difference between HCRHS and LTHS is the ages of the schools. This may be the most important difference, because of the sheer quantity of material at LTHS. HCRHS was fifty years old at the time of the article. The summer I spent working to build an archive at LTHS was just after its 125th anniversary. Some of the archival procedures that HCRHS undertook simply would not be feasible for LTHS. For example, the younger school converted all of its school newspapers to microfilm. This allows for easier

¹³⁴ William R. Fernekes and Harlene Z. Rosenberg, "Building a High School Archives Program: A Case Study in School-University Collaboration," *Journal of Archival Organization* vol. 6, no. 3 (2008), 151 – 168.

perusal of articles, because the researcher does not have to work with old and brittle pages. It creates a safer environment for those newspapers because they are not handled frequently. LTHS has roughly one hundred years' worth of newspapers. They have been published with varying frequency, from weekly to biweekly to roughly monthly. Additionally, the number of pages in a paper has varied from a front and a back all the way up to sixteen pages. The sheer number of newspapers, combined with their length, makes it illogical from a cost standpoint to convert them to microfilm at this point in time.

The HCRHS project was very well-received by the school administration and faculty. Most of the efforts were led by faculty members from the social studies department and from the libraries. At LTHS, the project has been run by an art and art history teacher since its beginnings in fall 2007. The entire project is in concert with the Alumni Relations office, and has received much support from the administration. However, it has been difficult to get involvement from the social studies teachers. Their aid would be a welcome addition to the project, in terms of research experience and the potential to incorporate it into lessons, thereby spreading the word about it and its findings.

Rutgers University staff and faculty worked in conjunction with program coordinators at HCRHS, helping to train them in proper archive techniques and guiding them in various decisions. The LTHS project has been done almost entirely in-house. There was involvement on the part of the University of Dayton, but this was through funding or indirect education. I used information learned in the Roesch Library U.S. Catholic Special Collection and in the University of Dayton University Archives, as well as thesis-specific conversations with professional archivists in my work over the summer of 2014. My work within the LTHS archives was self-directed, and not directed by a university faculty member like the HCRHS situation. Additionally, the distance between UD and LTHS would not have allowed for help on the same scale as with the other situation with Rutgers.

The question of funding also differed between the HCRHS and LTHS experiences. In New Jersey, the school received dedicated funding from the district superintendent. This was used to purchase the correct materials for storing the items in their archives, as well as creating a larger infrastructure to maintain the program. While the history project at LTHS has been very well received by the school administration, it has only ever asked for \$350 in funding. Before this summer, all of the materials they used were what was on hand at the time. There is a desire on the part of the history project coordinators and volunteers to see the hallway between the auditorium and the Community Room restored to its original design from the 1928 addition. The hope is that the fact that the project has not cost the school any money so far will aid this cause.

In addition to being a repository for school history and memorabilia, the HCRHS archive is also a repository for local history. This increases its visibility and usage, as those interested in regional history and not simply the history of the high school will still be directed to the HCRHS. The LTHS archive is simply used for the history of the school. Besides the LGAHS, there is a historical society in neighboring Western Springs, as well as larger historical repositories in Chicago. There is no need for LTHS's archive to store local history beyond what is directly related to the school. This changes the way in which the archive interacts with the local community. Those who visit it are looking for something specific to LTHS or education, not the area. Therefore, the pool of researchers is smaller.

The space dedicated to the archives is also a disparity between the two schools. At HCRHS, an exhibit space was created to display various pieces of history. They also built a room dedicated to the archives to guarantee a safe environment. The goal at LTHS is to find a space in which to show small exhibits from the archives. Currently display cases in the library are used, but space in and viewership of those is limited. There is the hope that the construction begun over the summer of 2014 will allow for some exhibit space. There has also been

conversation about finding a space external to the school in which to house the archives, to make for easier research and display. This would alleviate some of the difficulties currently presented by having the archives within a space used by students, as community visitors would no longer present a potential security concern. An external space would also allow for greater control of the environment. The archives are currently in their own secured room in the library, restricting access to only approved visitors. It is climate controlled and there is no real concern about problems stemming from water pipes or leaks. However, while humidity and light do not currently pose any problems, the lack of humidity controls and harsh fluorescent lighting could be fixed in an external space. A larger space, too, would allow for better monitoring of researchers.

The last large difference between the HCRHS situation and LTHS's is the incorporation of information in the archives into classroom instruction. As previously mentioned, this is one of LTHS's longterm goals, as well. The lack of participation from teachers in relevant subject areas has made this difficult, though. The discussion about lesson plans and teacher involvement needs to transition from simple outreach at this point. Perhaps a question that could be asked is what are the next steps to get teachers interested and involved? Increased awareness within the school would lead to increased awareness, and most likely support, externally.

Diana R. Sanderson has published an article about her experiences working with the archives at the Asheville School in Asheville, North Carolina, which helped to inform the LTHS project.¹³⁵ A private day boarding school, its public relations director began assembling boxes of materials that she had found in the attics and basements of various buildings on campus. This is relatively similar to the

¹³⁵ Diana R. Sanderson, "No Task is Unimportant: Working with High School Students in Archives," *Journal for the Society of North Carolina Archivists* vol. 6, no. 2, 92 – 98.

situation at LTHS. The Alumni Office also coordinates public relations, and the archive is under their jurisdiction.

The Asheville School received a donation from an alumnus to rework an existing room on the school campus into an archive. This allowed for the school to safely house their resources without putting a strain on their budget. As LTHS is a public school, it is unused to accepting donations of that scale. Any renovations would come directly from the school's budget. However, alumni have still been an important part of gathering artifacts and supplementing the information known by the school.

Lastly, the Asheville School was able to involve their students on a scale that LTHS cannot replicate. Students at the North Carolina institution are required to complete service hours on campus every other week during their freshman year. The archive's coordinator could take advantage of this by asking for one of the students' volunteering options to be helping with the archival process. Initially, students were assigned to this position, without being able to state a preference for the location they would prefer to volunteer in. This resulted in an uneven dedication to the project. In later years, the students were able to have more power over their volunteering, which helped the direction and morale of the student involvement.

The LTHS history project has long involved students, as well as recent alumni. They have been a part of the process in many areas, including research, photography, scanning, archiving, and publicity. All of these students have been volunteers, making for a positive work dynamic and relatively high level of dedication. Most of them have done it simply to contribute, as well, out of sheer interest. Over the summer, a small group of students regularly came in to assist with various tasks. These rising seniors were involved for service hour credit for the National Honor Society. However, they were all interested in the project

itself. One girl actually expressed an interest in following a similar course of study when she began college, which was very rewarding.

The archivist at Asheville wrote that she created a presentation to show student volunteers before they began their work. After the reworking of the system that allowed freshmen to have more input in their volunteering experience, she wrote that she

“instituted a change in how I introduced the archives and archival work. I learned two valuable lessons about how I should discuss my job with young students. First, I realized that most students probably had no idea what an archives was, let alone the mission and scope of the work ... none of the students who had signed up had ever visited an archives. Second, even though the students were all familiar with libraries, none knew how an archives differed from a library and what an archivist does.”¹³⁶

To better educate her students, she created a Power Point presentation to introduce students to the concept of an archive, and the basic principles that go into archival work. She found that she got much better results when students had a clear idea of her expectations and the rules of archiving. This approach was implemented as part of the LTHS project. I created a small handbook of archival rules and processes to share with students, either in presentations for them or before they began to work.¹³⁷

Phyllis Coulter also wrote an article about the experiences of establishing a high school archives, this time at Normal Community West High School.¹³⁸ Located in Normal, Illinois, the archives was created as the school approached its twenty year anniversary. The Normal West archives was created by an alumnus and a teacher, who was frustrated to see parts of the school’s history being thrown out or given away. The sponsor of the school’s Social Studies Club, he got his students involved and was also helped by an English and social studies teacher who had experience working in a museum.

¹³⁶ Sanderson, 94.

¹³⁷ See Appendix C.

¹³⁸ Phyllis Coulter, “Spotlight: Normal High School Starts Archive,” *The (Bloomington) Pantagraph*, Bloomington, IL, May 26, 2013.

This article recounts similar conditions that helped to inform the LTHS project. Similarly to LTHS, Normal West found themselves cataloguing much more than documents, books, and photos. Some of their more unique items included a shovel, a football helmet, and locker decorations. The archives at LTHS houses jewelry, apparel, medals, and even an ostrich egg and an alarm clock.

There are, however, differences between the experiences of LTHS and Normal West. Once again, the difference in the ages of the schools is notable. Normal West had far fewer things to archive – the article quoted a number just under 800. The 125 year lifespan of LTHS has placed far more items than that in the archives. The involvement of teachers is again a source of disparity. This project was led by a social studies and an English teacher, the latter of whom had museum experience. Patrick Page worked in a museum during the years in which he was pursuing his first graduate degree, so we do have a leader with professional experience. However, there is no involvement from the social studies or English departments. Normal West also integrated the process into other classes: for example, their manufacturing class built the display cases for their archive. While LTHS does have an extensive manufacturing/mechanical class offering, their projects are not related to the needs of the school.

The Archival Process

I first started working on this project as a senior at Lyons Township High School in the fall of 2011. That year I was taking an art history class at school, taught by Patrick Page. At that point, the project was still in its infancy, and he was looking for people to help him scan images out of old yearbooks and issues of the school newspaper.

I knew that I wanted to study history in college, but I also knew that while I loved to talk about the past, being a history teacher was not what I wanted to get into right after graduating. In looking for other paths that involved history education, I had recently landed on archival and museum work. To me, this opportunity was perfect to test the waters and see if this was really something that could be a career for me. In after-school sessions, I began to scan yearbooks, looking for interesting photographs or articles. After a few months on the project, I knew that working in an archive or a museum was something I would love to do.

The summer after I graduated from high school, I continued working on the project. We continued to scan from yearbooks and newspapers, and at this point had received some donations from faculty at the school. In some cases, “donation” is a loose term – at one point, an administrator walking the halls after classes let out for the summer found boxes left out to be taken as trash, later donating them to the project. These boxes were full of what turned out to be copies of the school newspaper from the beginning of the twentieth century. Another interesting acquisition was several student directories and handbooks from the 1940s and 50s. At this point, I had created a small-scale organizational system on several tables to keep track of the materials we were working with. It was very basic: each item had a specific location on a table, with painter’s tape dividing up the area and labeled in permanent marker. This was never intended to be a permanent organization system. It simply allowed us to see the items laid out and to ensure that no one had accidentally walked away with anything. Several

teams of people helped catalogue what we were finding in donated boxes, with inventories being drawn up of the items and their condition.

During my first year of college, I received periodic emails from Page, keeping me (and other interested people) up to date on what was happening with the project. Over holidays, I would return to the school, to help scan and look through what had been found. However, it took an internship in the U.S. Catholic Special Collection in Roesch Library to make me realize the extent of what was happening or what could happen at LTHS.

My internship, which occurred through the Honors Department, was my first real introduction to what working in an archive was like. I learned about proper archival methods and environments, and organizational systems. It was also how I learned about metadata and the process of getting images and items into a database. The next time I went back to LTHS, I made a more knowledgeable appraisal of the situation, and decided that something had to be changed. We had over 3,000 scans made of yearbooks and newspapers, all held in a system that few people really had experience finding things in. We had artifacts that had been donated or found around the school stored in a room in the library that few knew about. These items had been moved the year before from the fourth floor. We had ideas for ways to preserve or restore both the history of the 125-year school building, and the building itself. But, we had no good way to make any of these items or ideas useful and accessible to people who were not immediately linked to the project.

Luckily, this project was supported by the administration at LTHS. At this point, Page was writing up an article on different aspects of the history of the school each week, and putting it on the school's shared drive. He had forged ties with the Alumni Association office, who controlled the library room with the physical historical objects the school had. Jennifer Bialobok, the coordinator of the Alumni Association as well as the Community Relations director, has been a

supporter of the project from its infancy. It was her copies (as coordinator of the Alumni Association) of past yearbooks that we had scanned starting in 2011. Along with the administrative assistant for the office, Robyne Recht, she has continually offered advice and viewpoints from the perspective of an administrator. Additionally, David Franson, the principal of LTHS who retired at the end of the 2013-2014 school year, and district superintendent Dr. Timothy Kilrea, have always been interested in and supportive of the findings of the project.

Thanks to the administration, we knew that the project would have support to develop its activities. I knew I could write the metadata for the scanned images, so that a database could potentially be created someday. I also began to explore the possibility of coming in over the summer to organize the archives, and to use this project as the backbone of my thesis. The LTHS administration was nothing but helpful and encouraging, and soon my idea was confirmed. It was also decided that I would work on pulling together images and facts for any online exhibits the school might decide to do.

I began working on the organization of the archives in May 2014. The archive itself is located in the basement of North Campus, in its own room in the library. The room has windows out to the rest of library, but its own locked door, making it a secure storage space for the valuable artifacts inside. Initially, most of the items were stored in four large, lockable filing cabinets in the room. Yearbooks were kept on metal shelving units, along with visually interesting small pieces. Also on the shelves were boxes full of unsorted donations and acquisitions.

The room in which the archives are housed is remarkably environmentally stable. While in a basement, which might make it prone to water damage, the school has no history of flooding, and there are no water pipes in the walls of that room. The shelves and filing cabinets are all located at least six inches away from the walls, which would also protect against seepage or the initial damage of a burst water

pipe, if there were any there. The room does not have water access, which is another protection against damage from that cause. The basement location also protects from temperature fluctuations. All of items in the archives used to be located on the fourth floor of the building, in an attic space separated from former classrooms. This environment did not provide stable temperatures or humidity levels, as there is little insulation in the attic and no cooling system. Some concerns have been raised about a slight musty smell in the room for the archives in the library. However, construction during the summer of 2014 may have helped to abate any problem, and no items in the archives have shown evidence of mold damage attained in that setting.

The filing cabinets had a basic system of organization, based on type of item.¹³⁹ However, the groupings were not related: that is, the school's literary magazine would not necessarily be close to the school's paper. Items pertaining to student life were scattered through the cabinets, as were things like theatrical and band performance programs. The first thing I did was to go through the system I had been given, and rewrite it. With this, I placed like-categories together.

The initial organization was helpful, because even though I rearranged groups into more similar combinations, there was a basic map to where I could find things. I decided to base the system off of organizations or events, essentially. Therefore, I had sections for alumni reunions, athletic teams, building information, faculty records, student life, publications, and other basic fields of interest. Each section had its own subfields, as well. For example, the athletic section is split into the different teams for which I had information or artifacts, and the section on student organizations is split into the clubs themselves. This makes it easy both to find information on existing groups and to add information in later years. There will always be space for more items to be added into subcategories that are extant, and it is simple to add in a new subcategory.

¹³⁹ See Appendix B-1

Over the years, saving of items and documents was rather piecemeal. Until recently, there was no system in place or individual given authority to make sure they received things that could be of historical interest. Additionally, many of the items in the archives have come from donations. These donations are things that the collector found interesting, and unsurprisingly, people often have varying definitions of what is worth saving. There were years for which I found all the programs for band concerts in multiples, and years for which I had none. However, the past decade has seen a special effort to save relevant items for the archives, and the alumni newsletter has asked for donations several times.

As I reorganized, I started to pull out duplicate items. There were some cases in which I saved those duplicates. Items like early school newspapers or graduation programs from the 1920s were kept regardless of their number. I also kept two copies of more recent school newspapers, so that they could be used in display spaces in the library. Keeping display copies is useful where possible, because that allows for one copy to be kept in the safe environment of the archive for future researchers. The display copy would be exposed to harsher light and elements than would be in the archive, and would more quickly be destroyed or lose information. Duplicate items that the school did not want to keep were permanently removed, and important or interesting pieces were donated to the La Grange Area Historical Society.

Through the month of May I also made an effort to get into communication with teachers at LTHS. I first sent out a call requesting the donation of any items that would be appropriate for inclusion in the archives. I also inquired if there were any students interesting in volunteering their time over the summer for the archives. In the emails, I offered to look at any items teachers had that they thought might be of interest, as well as to come into classes and give a brief presentation or show classes the archives themselves. While the emails I sent were school-wide, we sent a separate email to social studies teachers before the mass emails. Consistent efforts have been made over the years to involve social

studies teachers more fully in the project of researching the history of the school. Patrick Page, who has led the effort since the beginning, is a studio art teacher who also teaches the school's Advanced Placement Art History class. While this class does fall into the social studies realm, the majority of his time is spent in the Fine Arts department.

Unfortunately, responses from social studies teachers were low. One social studies teacher offered me access to old athletic department trophies and plaques. Some teachers said that they were spreading the word and keeping an eye out for items that could belong in our archives. Several offered physical objects as donations. The largest donation came from a math teacher and several of her retired colleagues. This donation consisted mostly of homecoming and special event pins and gifts from the annual senior breakfast.

One of the long-term goals for this project is to find a way to more fully involve teachers, especially social studies teachers. I would be interested in helping teachers find a way to involve a mini-unit on the history of LTHS, or in helping them find a way to incorporate items from the archives into existing lesson plans. For example, Board of Directors minutes could be used to look at the history of La Grange, a picture of students from the 1920s could be the prompt of a creative writing exercise, or pictures of trees outside the building could be used to look at growth rates. Making the archives easier to access via a consistent organizational system may encourage teachers to take advantage of them. Teachers are already pressed for time, and may not have any to dedicate to incorporating the archives into their classes, even if they are interested in doing so.

Because of construction happening at North Campus in the summer of 2014, the archives had to be relocated in their entirety. The work I did throughout the month of May of eliminating duplicate items helped free up space in the filing cabinets and decrease their weight. I used that extra space in the drawers to store loose items from the bookshelves. This allowed me to minimize the pieces that

would have to be moved from the North Campus to South. I placed the yearbooks into boxes to protect them during the move and make sure that they stayed together.

The move was conducted by the buildings and ground staff of LTHS, overseen by myself and done in close contact with the buildings and ground head, Kevin Mitros. Mitros has been another great supporter of the project studying the history of the school. He has made sure that his staff members know to bring any historical things they might find within the building to the faculty members associated with the project, and has also been very generous in letting project members into restricted areas of the school. It is thanks to him that we have been able to get up onto the fourth floor storage space and into the bell tower with the frequency that we have enjoyed. Mitros often jokes that he likes the project because it takes things off of the fourth floor instead of bringing things up there, but his trust and flexibility has led to some of our most interesting discoveries.

On the last day of the 2013-2014 school year, the archives were packed into a truck and moved the mile to South Campus. They were relocated to a large classroom generally used for engineering and flight classes. The space was shared with IT for storage and cleaning of computers, but access was restricted to myself, the IT employees, and buildings and grounds. The filing cabinets were lockable, and remained locked when I was not there, adding to the security of the room. The temperature of the room was stable, and there was no risk of water damage. While there were skylights, they were tinted, which minimized the risk of fading from sunlight. Even so, pieces were stored in the filing cabinets when not in active use to protect from any damage.

I began the reorganization process in earnest during the summer of 2014. I had identified what was in the archives in May, and made an inventory of everything I ran into. This was one of the most helpful things I did, because I could go through my notes and identify what should be grouped together. I also knew

exactly where things were in the filing cabinets, based off the labels in and order of my notes. As I regrouped items, I placed them into archive-safe housing. This was purchased through the University of Dayton Honors Program grant.

Before the reorganization, documents and photos were stored in manila folders, and those in hanging files in the cabinets. While the boxes they came in may have indicated that they were acid-free, this alone is not enough to protect what is in the folders. If the folders are not “buffered,” or created and treated with special materials, they can become acidic based on what is inside of them, which would accelerate deterioration. For general use, these folders are appropriate, but when the items being stored and protected are documents created beginning in the late nineteenth century, archive-safe materials are a necessity.¹⁴⁰ Purchasing these allowed me to ensure that what was already in the archives would have reduced deterioration, and also allowed me to give a resource to the school that they would know to purchase for later additions.

During this, I also finished up the consolidation of items in the archives. Many items were donated to the La Grange Area Historical Society. The Historical Society has been an excellent resource for LTHS as we have moved through the process of understanding more of the school’s history in order to contextualize the archival holdings with which we were working. They have documents and photographs that do not appear in our archives, and have been very kind in letting us come and look at them. The long past of the Historical Society and the dedication of its volunteers has resulted in the several instances where we were able to confirm accounts from research in the school archives and contribute new contextual information to our project. Patrick Page has forged an especially strong relationship with them, and we were happy to provide them with items being discarded from our collection. An example of this strong relationship can be seen in a presentation that Page did in the spring of 2014 about the history of

¹⁴⁰ Mary Lynn Rizenthaler, *Preserving Archives and Manuscripts: Second Edition* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2010), pages 43 – 64.

the school and the local area. Held after school, it drew community and school board members, who were able to speak with both Page and representatives from other local history presentations.

I was fortunate enough to work with several high school students over the summer. They worked on their own schedules, none of them coming in consistently. I encouraged this, preferring to have them come in when they were interested rather than have a large group of students who were just there for the service hours. At least one student told me that she was interested in pursuing a history degree in college, and was using this project much as I had at her age, as a way to explore a potential career field.

Before the summer began, I created a small guide to archiving for students to read before they began work.¹⁴¹ I pulled the information from archives management textbooks, and from the lessons I had learned from working in the U.S. Catholic Special Collection and the University Archives. This allowed them to feel comfortable with their work and the rules of an archive. They knew how to treat the materials, and what they should expect of their tasks. Originally, I had intended to allow them to help me with the reorganization of items in the filing cabinet and moving them into archive safe folders. However, this was completed before students got in to work. Instead, most students helped scan and photograph items. They also went through yearbooks to help build lists of clubs and organizations and their presence at LTHS, as well as to make a list of theatrical productions at the school. This would help identify some of the programs in the archives, which often lacked years, and even calendar dates. Lastly, a few students also helped me create finding aids for the archives. These documents would allow researchers to come into the archives and have an idea of where to look for their information, without requiring someone intimately familiar with the archives to be present whenever a researcher was.

¹⁴¹ See Appendix C.

Besides the reorganization of the archives and the movement of items to more logical groupings, I worked on two other major projects. The first was a continuation of the ongoing project to build a database of articles from the school newspaper, the *Lion*. Begun in January of 1910, the student-run newspaper has been published continually, with its frequency shifting between weekly, fortnightly, and monthly. It is an invaluable source of information about the school's past and students. Page has been working for over a year to transcribe articles relevant to historical interests or student life, and I assisted in this process. The archives held newspapers that we previously had no idea we still had, but were found through my reorganization project. I was able to spend time that summer evaluating them and adding articles into the database. It will help future researchers expedite their research projects, including Page, who each week of the 2013-2014 school year wrote up an article on a different aspect of the history of the school.

Another item I worked on was a timeline of the different clubs and organizations that had been or are currently present at LTHS. Many clubs have had a long and productive career at LTHS, such as the debate club, which has won state titles dating as far back as the 1920s. I began compiling information on the organizations I came across in yearbooks and in school newspaper, and noting the source of the information. Eventually, this information will be made accessible to anyone who is interested in it or who needs it for research.

Beyond being of interest to alumni and current students, as well as a source of pride for the school, information on different student groups can reveal a lot about the needs and interests of the community at a given time. For example, the earliest clubs to show up at LTHS were things like Shakespeare Club, Mandolin Club, and tennis.¹⁴² These are all clubs that support an interest in something "higher," or cultural. It shows that early students and their families probably were fairly well-educated to have been exposed to such topics. It also demonstrates a

¹⁴² Hays, chapter XI, page 3.

pride in the idea of the “Renaissance man,” who could participate in conversations on literature and music, support himself in a good position, and still be a good athlete.

Several calls to alumni have been made over the years, asking for any information or items that they would be willing to share or donate with the archives. This has resulted in many items and memories being sent to the school. Notable examples of this include jewelry, yearbooks, letterman jackets, and scrapbooks.

Oftentimes, these are accompanied by handwritten notes from alumni, eager to tell the stories of their younger days. It was one of these notes that explained to us the origins of one of the fraternities at LTHS, obviously no longer in existence. Through these moments of outreach, our archives have been enriched with both historical artifacts and memories.

Even locals who did not attend LTHS are interested and involved in its history. Many families are legacies at LTHS, going back two, three, or four generations. Still, even transplants to the area who have children attending the school are curious about its past and maintaining it. Each year at homecoming, self-guided tours of each campus are offered. This allows alumni who have returned for a reunion to see how their former classrooms have changed, but also for inquisitive locals to get a look inside. For the past several years, tours have been enriched by Page, who has been able to give an insider’s look at the history and beauty of the school. These tours have been immensely popular, with people coming each year and remembering being upset they had heard about the opportunity too late the year before. On these tours, the school becomes a gathering place for both graduates and non-graduates, bringing them together to appreciate the past and the importance of the school.

Conclusion to the Archival Process

Since the first day I heard about the LTHS history project, I have been passionate about supporting it. I have always been interested in history, and was naturally

drawn to experiences that might tell me more about the places in which I spent my time. The saying “if these walls could talk” has always driven my imagination wild. Throughout this process, I have become more and more convinced of the importance of maintaining local history, and specifically the history of LTHS.

One of the most immediately intriguing aspects of the history of LTHS is the history of the building itself. The United States is still a relatively new country; its architectural history is not long. Aside from simply being a visually appealing building, there are parts of North Campus that represent notable time periods in American architecture. Portions of the building have remained very well maintained, sometimes simply by accident. With documents and images found in the archives, the school can have an even better understanding of how different rooms and locations used to look. If there is the desire to restore some areas of the building, there are now more resources to do so. Our findings have also explained some of the quirks of the building: the tile color changes come from different additions and expansions, and the seemingly nonsensical numbering system of lockers was actually based around the then-busiest hallway intersection in the school.

Perhaps even more important than the architectural aspects of the school is the relationship with the community that has emerged from archival research. As a public high school, LTHS is reliant on the district for funding, and for many of the decisions that happen regarding the school. Construction happens because of a bond issue or referendum. Sports teams are dependent on having a population willing to play them: for almost a decade at the turn of the twentieth century, there was no football team because local mothers thought it was too dangerous. Classes, too, are selected based off the needs of the student body. Due to the wide range of students enrolled at LTHS, the school has long maintained a varied course offering. While college preparation has been a goal since the beginning of the school, preparation for the working world quickly became incorporated.

Today, students can not only take Advanced Placement courses for college credit – they can also learn about engines, practice robotics, student teach, prepare for culinary school, or work towards a pilot’s license. The economic and interest diversity of the students makes each of these tracks a popular one.

LTHS has also made an effort to give back to the district, as well. Its dedication to adult and continuing education courses is one such example. University extension lectures were offered not even five years after the creation of the school, and career education and degree completion have been mainstays of the adult and evening classes offered. The University of Illinois Extension at the high school during World War II was one of the most successful branches. It was highly successful at instructing factory workers in how to take over the more managerial roles being vacated by engineers being called to the front. It even taught English to Mexican nationals employed by the CB&Q Railroad.¹⁴³

The school remains a gathering place for the community, true to the vision of 1928 architect Joseph C. Llewellyn. Theatrical and dance performances draw full houses; sporting events are well-attended. The school’s willingness to rent its spaces to non-LTHS groups increases their reach. Local theatrical groups often give their summer performances in the theatres of both campuses. And on a Friday night, many locals can be found at Bennett Field cheering on the Lions, especially if the game is against the rival Hinsdale Central High School Red Devils. The cheering and the band can be heard over half a mile away. What can be found in the archives explains the past of these celebrations and gatherings, from homecoming to the school musical.

One other notable result of this project is the ease of access that researchers can now enjoy. Someone interested in the way that high schools were founded in the late nineteenth century can now easily be directed to the location of the school’s founding documents. They can also find some of the textbooks in the junior

¹⁴³ *Tabulae 1945* (La Grange, IL: Lyons Township High School, 1945) 95.

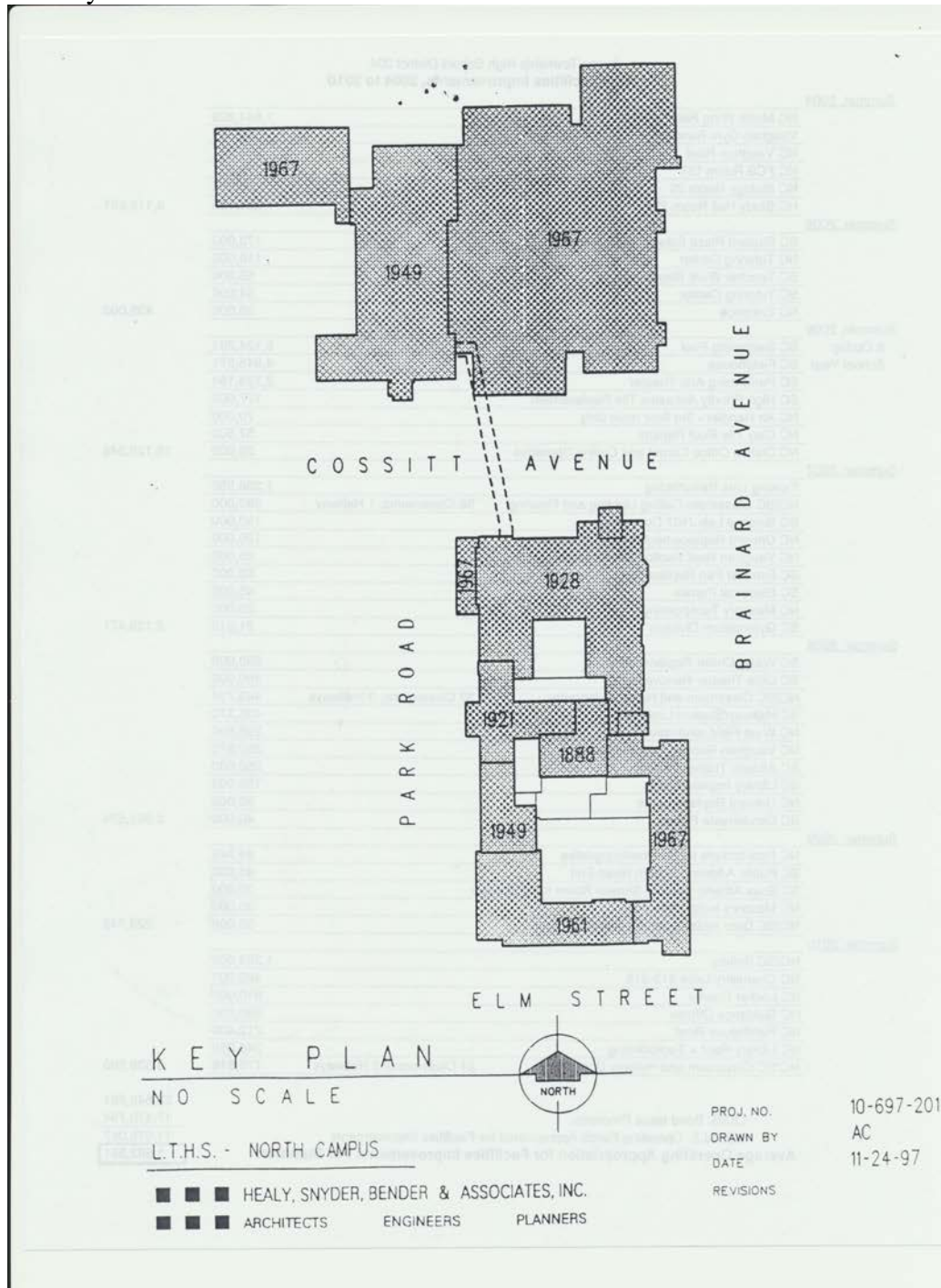
college's library to explore old standards and methods of teaching. A researcher interested in the development of sport teams in high schools can look through the boxes of athletic information, dating back to the early 1900s. Those interested in the experiences of students in times of war can easily look through the folders of military information at LTHS, including a commendation from the Treasury congratulating LTHS on their successes with war bond sales. Lastly, someone interested in their own genealogy can now try to find family members with much more ease. They can look through the collection of yearbooks, through old alumni reunion publications, and even through the ledgers of the first students to enter LTHS's halls. This may be the most rewarding result of all: the knowledge that someday, someone may be able to better understand their own family because of what LTHS is offer to able them.

While much has been accomplished at LTHS, there is still more work to be done. I had planned on creating a database of newspaper articles and scanned images for the school. However, the rehousing process took up more time than anticipated, and so the database is still in the process of being written. Once construction in the North Campus is totally completed, there may be new and larger spaces in which to display information about the history of the school. I will put together potential exhibits for display cases, and am also involved in looking at printing a large timeline of the school to be hung in a hallway. I also plan to continue finding and suggesting interesting facts or images to be displayed on the school's website and social media outlets. Because of the relationship with LTHS that was established through this thesis, I will be able to continue my work at the school. As I increase my archival knowledge in graduate school and professional experiences, I can bring it back to LTHS to improve on the work I have done, and to find new projects and educational opportunities.

Appendices

Appendix A: Map of School Additions

Courtesy Alumni Association Archives



Appendix B: Major Early Local Schools¹⁴⁴

Ideal School

The Ideal School could basically be seen as the descendant of the first school at Joliet and Wolf. After that log cabin schoolhouse was closed, new ones were built at Plainfield and Willow Springs, as well as East and Joliet. Margaret McKinnon, eventual wife of Samuel Vial, taught at the second school. In 1886, her husband donated that land to be used as a permanent school, and a new building was constructed. Unfortunately, this school burned down in March of 1918. It was quickly rebuilt at the same location. This school was seen as the “ideal” school for the rural community it was located in, and the name stuck. It was later rebuilt near 58th Street and La Grange Road.

Cossitt School

If Ideal School is the descendent of the first school in the area, Cossitt School is the descendent of the first school in the village of La Grange. At some point in the mid-1800s, the school was moved from its location at Brainard and Cossitt to Madison and Cossitt. It was initially just a simple wooden building, but in the 1880s, a limestone one replaced it. To construct a building out of expensive limestone shows the pride in education that villagers held. Then again in 1921, the school building was replaced, and remains the same building today. If the prior building had shown pride in education, this building showed double. Cossitt School became a state of the art education facility, done in the Tudor architectural style. It had a swimming pool and a large auditorium with its own grand piano. During the same time period, each graduating class also bought a painting to beautify the school, showing that pride in one’s education and public buildings was something ingrained in even La Grange’s youngest citizens.

North School

¹⁴⁴ The following information comes from the La Grange Centennial book.

North School was built in 1893, on Kensington Avenue. It was between Bell and Ogden Avenues. Today, Kensington Preschool has a building in that location.

Poet's Corner

The origins of the name of Poet's Corner School have unfortunately been lost. The school no longer stands, but was located at what was then called Fifth Avenue, as the main street in La Grange was named after the busiest street in New York City. The school was later moved to La Grange Road and Oak Avenue in La Grange Park, and does not exist there today, either.

East School

Known today as Congress Park School, the land for this elementary school was donated in 1889 by Mrs. Elizabeth Harper.

Ogden Avenue School

Ogden Avenue School replaced Poet's Corner in 1910. Today, it is the home of the Nettie J. McKinnon Art Collection, which was begun by students of Oak Avenue School. The collection is named after its founder, McKinnon, who was the principle of both schools between 1929 and 1960. She encouraged students at Oak Avenue, which served grades 7 and 8, to sell magazine subscriptions as a fundraiser. She used that money to purchase works of art. The collection of 150 pieces includes works by artists now exhibited nationally and internationally, including John Singer Sargent and Charles Vickery.

Appendix C-1: Archival Tips

ARCHIVAL VOCABULARY¹⁴⁵

Archives – permanently valuable records received and accumulated by formal organizations such as governments, businesses, and nonprofit organizations in the process of conducting their daily business

Manuscripts – valuable historical or literary records of people or families created, received, assembled, or accumulated as they conducted their daily personal activities

Provenance – relationship between records and organizations or the individuals that created, accumulated, and/or maintained and used them in the conduct of their personal activity

Survey – systematic procedure used to gather information about records and papers not in the archives' immediate custody

Evidential value – origins or substantive programs of the creating entity

Substantive records – show the core of the department's function

Facilitative records – supporting records necessary for the main activity of the entity

ARCHIVAL DOS AND DON'TS

General Rules

- Do not bring food into an archival area. The only beverage allowed is water, which should be placed far from any work areas.
- Make sure your hands are clean.
- If a rusty paperclip can be easily removed, replace it with a plastic one.
- Do not remove tape or other adhesives.

Going Through Documents

- Pull file folders out of boxes to look at them.
- Make sure file folders are standing upright in their box.
- Use two hands to move/remove delicate documents.
- If you are bringing a document to another location, use both hands.

Using Books

- Never, ever pull a book off the shelf by hooking your finger over the top of the spine.
- Gently push back the books on either side of the desired book, and pull out the book grasping around the spine.
- Never force a book to open fully. You could crack the spine.
- Never touch the images in a book. Dirt and oils on your fingertips can damage it.

¹⁴⁵ Kathleen D. Roe, "Arranging & Describing Archives & Manuscripts," (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005) 12.

Going Through Photographs

- Do not touch photographs or negatives with your bare hands. Wear cotton gloves.
- Never pick up a photograph with one hand. Use both hands to gently pick up the photograph by its sides.
- Never touch the actual image on the photograph.
- If placing a photograph into adhesive corners, never bend or force the photo into the corners. Place the corners onto the photograph first, then place it where you'd like it to be.

ARRANGING

1. Prepare the workspace
2. Review any acquisition or other relevant documents
3. Go through the collection once without rearranging anything
4. Develop a processing plan
5. Sort out the series
6. Process to the filing unit level
7. Process to the item level
8. Lock in a final arrangement level
9. Prepare a general box and folder listing

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

1. Make sure you have a clear and clean spot to work. Get all the things you'll need to do your processing. This could mean file folders, boxes, photo sleeves, pencils, post-its, and note paper.
2. If there's any documentation about the collection, read it before you start to look at the collection itself. Most of our different collections have always been at LTHS, so there's nothing to be read about how we got them. One thing to read could be anything that Mr. Page has written about the topic.
3. Go through the collection. Take notes about what's in it, if you like, but don't rearrange anything. Remember archival handling rules as you go. Figure out what is in the collection, and think about how it should be organized. If there's anything that you think needs special protection or something that you think should be moved, make a note of it and ask Maddie.
4. Figure out how to organize the collection. Decide how to sort it out – by year, alphabetically, by subject, or some combination. Try to keep it to one method; if you're combining two or more, you should probably be creating separate series in the collection. Check with Maddie before you start sorting.
5. Sort out the series according to the plan you checked with Maddie. Remember to work within archival handling rules – be careful.
6. Put your different sorted groups into file folders. Keep in mind a general idea of what your different divisions are.

7. If there are any special items that need individual attention or separate processing, work on those now.
8. Do a final check on your arrangement and divisions with Maddie.
9. Make a list of the divisions that you have made, and label the file folders and box(es). The names of the file folders should be descriptive, but short. An example might be “Tennis Team 1930 – 1939.”

ARRANGEMENT HINTS

1. “When in doubt, chicken out:” hesitate to change original order if there are any questions
2. Remember the “test of creation:” who created this item?
3. Records follow function
4. Do the least rearranging possible to make the collections usable
5. Avoid more than one system in a collection
6. Use chronological order within the file folders
7. Create complete but terse file names

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

1. If you’re not sure whether or not to change the original order, don’t. It’s easier to try and change it later than it is to try and put back the original order. Ask Maddie.
2. Keep things from the same creator together. For the most part, the creator is LTHS, so this shouldn’t be too difficult.
3. The collections are in the order they are in for a reason. It’s your job to figure out what that reason is (it might not be a good one...) and to decide whether it still makes sense for our purposes.
4. Try and keep the original order as much as possible. Again, collections are in the order they are for a reason. Totally rearranging them means that they lose some of their original purpose.
5. If you’re sorting a collection based on their subject, you can’t sort the entire collection based on chronology as well. That would allow for things to be in two places at once, which forces the arranger to make decisions on where things belong “more,” which means added work and confusion for a later researcher.
6. At first glance, this might seem to contradict suggestion 5. This isn’t saying to arrange the whole collection chronologically, though. Rather, once you’ve sorted out your collection into series and subseries, arrange those items in chronological order in the file folders and boxes.
7. The file folders should have short and descriptive file names. Ideally, this should be the subject of the documents in the file folder, and the years that they cover.

REFERENCE AIDS

- Give the location of collections, identify their source, and outline their general contents
- Go beyond content to provide a context
- Internal - container lists, indexes
- External – finding aids

QUALITIES OF GOOD FINDING AIDS

- Written for the researcher
- Objective about collection
- Aware of the needs of the researchers
- Clear, concise, and consistent
- Efficient

CREATING A FINDING AID

1. Preface: policies on access and restrictions
2. Introduction: contents, provenance, research restrictions
3. Biographical sketch or the agency's history
4. Scope and contents: material formats, divisive dates, important divisions, major pieces
5. Series description: individual dates, material quantity, material formats, internal arrangement, major subjects
6. Container listing
7. Index/item listing

PRESERVATION SURVEYS

- Primary housing
- Secondary housing
- Types of records
- Condition
- Special concerns
- Recommendations
- Priority

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN

- How are the files overall stored? On a shelf? In a drawer? In big cardboard boxes?
- How are the files directly stored? In folders? In albums? Just sitting there?
- What kinds of records are there? Books? Photos? Video tapes? Textiles?
- How are the records doing? Are they water damaged? Are they exposed to sunlight? Are they brittle or ripped?
- What are the most important things to pay attention to? The potential for water damage? Ongoing decay?
- What should be done to protect the records?
- How imperative is it to make these changes? Will the records be damaged if they aren't taken care of immediately, or are they relatively safe where they are now?

ACCESSING THE ARCHIVES

Entrance Interview

- Confirm the identity of the researcher
- Determine their needs
- Explain rules and regulations
- Explain the finding aids

While Researching

- Check the personal belongings
- Sign a logbook
- Complete a call slip
- Only staff retrieves materials
- Staff is always in the reference room
- The records are returned to the staff

Exit Interview

- How valuable was the information to the researcher?
- How useful were the finding aids?
- Did the researcher have any problems?
- How helpful was the staff?

Appendix C-2: Collection Policy

1. AUTHORITY

The archives of Lyons Township High School (LTHS) are the property of the LTHS Alumni Association, and subject to the rules and regulations brought about by the administration of the school, its school board, and its superintendent, as well as the needs and decisions of the Alumni Association.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the archives of LTHS is to record and maintain the history of the school and its students, faculty, and community members. The archives will be made available to interested parties, which may include but is not limited to: LTHS students, faculty, and staff, researchers, journalists, and genealogists or family history researchers.

3. FOCUS

The primary focus of the archives is to preserve ephemera related to the activities of LTHS since its inception, continuing into the future. This includes but is not limited to items related to: the buildings of LTHS, sports teams, extracurriculars, photographs of students and/or faculty at LTHS, and special events or traditions of LTHS.

4. ACCEPTABLE FORMATS

The archives of LTHS can currently accept several formats of archival items, depending on the extent of similar items already in the archives. The archives cannot accept yearbooks at this time, unless they are ones missing from the collections or of suitable quality to replace what is currently in the collections. The archives cannot accept copies of *The Lion* for the same reason. The archives can accept the following, dependent on their relevancy to the collections and available space: paper documents, photographs, scrapbooks, mementos, sound recordings, video recordings, and a limited amount of textile goods.

5. ACCEPTING MATERIALS

Materials accepted into the collections must be approved by the Community and Alumni Relations Coordinator, as well as those responsible for directly maintaining the archives. An accession form and other relevant documents (deed of gift, deposit form) must also be filled out when materials are accepted. Records deemed missing from the collection will be actively sought, and periodic requests for general records may be issued to the LTHS community.

6. REMOVAL OF MATERIALS

Materials may be removed upon agreement between the Community and Alumni Relations Coordinator and those responsible for directly

maintaining the archives. Sensitive documents will be shredded before being placed into waste removal areas. Efforts will be made to relocate non-sensitive materials into repositories where they are more applicable before being disposed of.

7. LOANS

Loans of the archival materials of LTHS may be made upon agreement between the Community and Alumni Relations Coordinator and those directly responsible for maintaining the archives. Agreement is dependent on the condition and replaceability of the items to be loaned, the length of the loan, and the location to which the loan will be made. If a loan is deemed acceptable, a loan agreement must be signed and a record made in the archives proper of the loaned-out item for reference in case a researcher comes to look at that item.

Appendix D-1: Original Organization of Filing Cabinets

| LTHS HISTORIC ARCHIVES | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| FILE CABINETS - Library Room J | CONTENTS |
| CABINET # 1 | |
| Drawer # 1 - Top drawer | Homecoming |
| | Jewelry |
| | Military |
| | Music |
| Drawer # 2 | Reunions |
| | Alumni |
| Drawer # 3 | Publications- Roar, Matters of Pride, Fine Arts Cal. |
| | Theatre programs |
| | WLTL |
| | LTHS TV |
| Drawer # 4 | LION 1970 - Current |
| Drawer # 5 | LION 1912 - 1969 |
| CABINET # 2 | |
| Drawer # 1 - Top drawer | Pen & Inklings / Menagerie |
| | School Anniversaries |
| | Building Info and Finances |
| | Graduation Info |
| | Teacher Info |
| Drawer # 2 | Corral |
| Drawer # 3 | Curriculum Guides |
| | Directories - School report cards |
| | Miscellaneous Class Info & CLUBS |
| Drawer # 4 | Buttons |
| | Textbooks |
| Drawer # 5 | Gold & Blue Handbooks & Student activities booklets |
| CABINET # 3 | |
| Drawer # 1 - Top drawer | Junior College |
| | Dedications / Grand Openings |
| | Photos |
| | Hall of Fame |
| | Newsletters |
| Drawer # 2 | Superintendent Memorabilia |
| Drawer # 3 | Athletics - includes patches and banners |
| Drawer # 4 | LTHS History |
| | 50th Golden Anniversary Album |
| Drawer # 5 | Original Student Records |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| | Guide Books |
| | |
| CABINET # 4 | |
| Drawer # 1 - Top drawer | PTC - HSC Calendars |
| | |
| Drawer # 2 | Alumni News |
| | |
| Drawer # 3 | 1955-56 large photos - basketball and cheerldr |
| | |
| Drawer # 4 | |
| Drawer # 5 | |
| Drawer #6 | Academic Program Guides |
| | |
| CABINET # 5 | Historically found items - trophies, larger items |

SHELVES

Complete set of yearbooks 1909-present
1910 not available

Appendix D-2: File Cabinet Rearrangement System

PROPOSED REARRANGEMENT

Like items have been grouped together, so ideally, we could have a drawer that is only Alumni materials, a drawer that is only building-related, et cetera. This makes assigning identifiers to items and scans easier.

When there's a full list of headings (like Alumni) and categories (like Hall of Fame), I can assign each category a number. If Floorplans was still the fourth item under the buildings heading, it would be given the number four. Any folders under the heading of Buildings would have a label that started with BUI, with each category getting its own folder. The first floorplan in the folder would get the name BUI-4-01. That way, anyone who understood the naming system would know exactly where to find it: the first item in the fourth folder in the drawer labeled BUI.

ALUMNI (ALU)

- Alumni (photos of, items relating to specific alumni)
- Hall of Fame
- Newsletters
- Reunions
- Miscellaneous

BUILDINGS (BUI)

- Building information
- Class information
- Exterior photos
- Floorplans
- Interior photos
- Textbooks
- Miscellaneous

FACULTY (FAC)

- Curriculum guides
- Photographs
- Superintendent information
- Miscellaneous

FINE ART (FIN)

- Art
- LTTV

- Music
- Theatre
- WLTL
- Miscellaneous

HISTORY (HIS)

- Anniversaries
- Historical publications
- Memorabilia
- Miscellaneous

LYONS TOWNSHIP JUNIOR COLLEGE (LTJC)

- Photographs
- Publications
- Miscellaneous

ORGANIZATIONS (ORG)

- Clubs
 - Debate
 - Philo
 - Science and Maths
 - Corral
 - Military
- Sports
 - Baseball (men's)
 - Baseball (women's)
 - Basketball (men's)
 - Basketball (women's)
 - Cheerleading
 - Football
 - Miscellaneous

PUBLICATIONS (PUB)

- Calendar
- LION
- Newsletters
- Pen and Ink/Menagerie
- Yearbooks
- Miscellaneous

SPECIAL EVENTS (SPE)

- Dances
- Dedications
- Graduation
- Homecoming
- Traditions
- Miscellaneous

STUDENTS (STU)

- Activity booklets
- Guidebooks
- Handbooks
- Photographs
- Miscellaneous

Appendix D-3: Accession Form

ACCESSION FORM

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| LYONS TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL | DATE RECEIVED: | ACCESSION NO.: |
| TITLE: | | |
| CREATOR: | | |
| DONOR NAME AND ADDRESS: | | |
| CURRENT LOCATION: | SIZE: | |
| GENERAL DESCRIPTION: | RESTRICTIONS: | |
| TYPES OF MATERIAL AND AMOUNT: | | |
| ARRANGEMENT: | | |
| APPROX. INCLUSIVE DATES: | ACCESSIONED BY, DATE: | |
| OTHER NOTES: | | |

Appendix D-4: Deed of Gift Form

DEED OF GIFT

| | | |
|--|----------------|----------------|
| LYONS TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL | DATE RECEIVED: | ACCESSION NO.: |
| TITLE: | | |
| CREATOR: | | |
| DONOR NAME AND ADDRESS: | | |
| This donation has been received by the Archives as a gift, and the owner or his agent with full authority, desiring to absolutely transfer full title by signing below, hereby gives, assigns, and conveys finally and completely, and without any limitation or reservation, the property described below to the Archives and its successors and assigns permanently and forever, together with (when applicable) any copyrights therein and the right to copyright the same. | | |
| DESCRIPTION OF GIFT: | | |
| CREDIT LINE: | | |
| SIGNATURES: | | |
| Donor: | | Date: |
| Printed Name: | | |
| Director's Name: | | Date: |

Conditions Governing Gifts:

1. It is understood that all gifts are outright and unconditional unless otherwise noted upon this gift agreement.
2. Gifts to the Archives may be deductible in accordance with provisions of federal income tax laws.
3. LTHS reserves the right to refuse portions of donations; in these cases, refused items will be returned to their donors unless the donor specifies otherwise.
3. The donor name on this form has not received any goods or services from the Archives in return for this gift.
4. The staff of the Archives is not permitted to furnish appraisals.
5. Please use "CREDIT LINE" above to indicate how you would like to be acknowledged in any news releases, exhibit labels, or other publicity regarding this donation.

Appendix D-5: Sample Finding Aid

Lyons Township High School
Alumni Association Archives

HST History

Administrative Information:

Creator: Miscellaneous

Dates: 1938 - 1988

Processed by: Madeline McDermott

Preferred Citation: [Item.] History. Alumni Association Archives, Lyons Township High School, La Grange, Illinois.

| Series Holdings | Folder | |
|--------------------|--------|--|
| 1 | 1 | School Anniversaries |
| 2 | 1 | Centennial (Germaine Olson's Research) |
| | 2 | Centennial |
| 3 | 1 | History of LT |
| 4 | 1 | Local History |
| | 2 | Local History |

Scope and Contents:

This collection has information on both school and local history. Documents and ephemera from school anniversaries, especially the centennial, the general history of the school, and the history of the area can be found. The collection dates from 1938 to 1988, with the bulk of the collection having been created in the 1970s and 1980s.

Series 1: School Anniversaries 1938 - 1968

This series has information on the 50th and 80th anniversaries of the school. There are programs from the 1938 anniversary, as well as a guest book with over 1,000 signatures of alumni from festivities held for that anniversary. There is also an article on the 1968 anniversary.

Series 2: c.1980 - 1988

Beginning in the early 1980s, LT teacher Germaine Olson began compiling information on the history of the school. She intended this to be completed for the 100th anniversary of the school. There are articles about her project, as well as her own research. Of particular interest may be the questionnaires she sent out to various alumni and their responses.

Series 3: n.d.

In this series are general documents related to the background of the school. This includes a history of LT written by George Willett, as well as Llewellyn correspondence from the 1928 addition.

Series 4: 1927 - 1963

The local history series includes town papers from significant anniversaries for the towns, most of which include histories of the towns and memories of inhabitants. There is a document produced by the local League of Women Voters, as well as ink drawings of local landmarks.

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