

## Greetings Brainerd History fans!

2018/1/5: Today I met with John Erickson who is working on a project called *Brainerd Public School Archives*. The idea is to round up anything in the buildings of a historical nature and catalog and preserve it. When I was cleaning terlits for ISD 181 for a couple of winters, I was amazed at how some old photos, books and records were just strewn about in basement and closets. Yearbooks were all over the place from school to school, and class photos getting crumpled. There are 1960's aerial photos of the schools in the basement of Washington, and since they are in color are now turning pink. Then there was that big chunk of sandstone in the parking lot at Lincoln School.

So, the 2 things I had on my mind were those aerial photos, to find and scan them, and those sandstone chunks in the playground at Lincoln, to preserve them. I doubt John had envisioned a chunk of stone as being an item that might be "archived"! I suppose the norm would be paperwork like documents or attendance records, personnel or testing records, and photos and books. But a chunk of stone? We met this morning at Lincoln, and located what appears to be a remnant of the 1893 school was still sitting here. This is only an assumption on my part, but it appears to be similar but larger than the window sills I have from the 1904 Ransford Hotel, complete with dimples on the ends for lifting with "tongs". When I hauled 20 out of the hole by the high school in 1975, later the Green Lot and now the soccer field, the guys from Hengel called the stone **sandstone**. I don't know if this is accurate. It is quite red, and pretty porous. They do crack in half quite easily, but don't seem to flake or shale off, and although porous are resistant to thick lichen. They do turn blackish as you can see on the bottom photos of the Ransford sills, sitting outside since 1975. Note the 2 spots of non-black where I had flower pots sitting. The one at Lincoln was intact a few years ago, but it was moved perhaps when they took down that huge tree, maple I think. Either it broke when they moved it, or they did it on purpose to make it more manageable. I was able to move the smaller piece myself, but I think intact it would have required 2 hefty folks and a good handcart, but it could be done. Mine are smaller but about 125 pounds, so these may run 160. The point is, if these are indeed part of the old school, and Lincoln may be torn down in the future, **we should see about preserving these remnants of our history**. It could be a window sill or any other part of the building I suppose. I don't think this type of stone was used as footings or foundations.

2009 photos:



A closer look at the stone before the break reveals some chisel marks in 2 locations, the one the right perhaps being where the final break occurred. Were these marks an attempt to break it apart by maintenance personnel, or was it kids playing with a hammer and chisel? Were the marks there when it was in the original building? If only stones could talk.



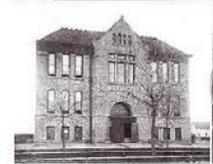
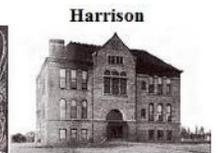
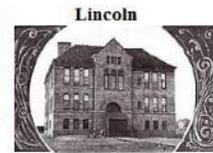
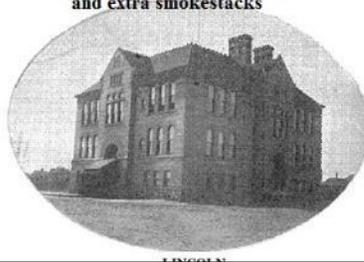
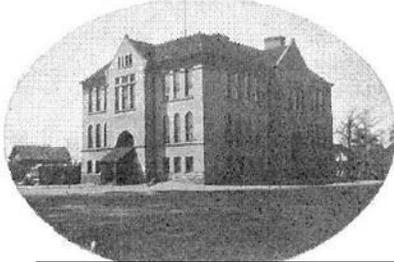
Markups courtesy of Jeremy Jackson. Lincoln and Harrison had arched transom windows, if indeed he has them labeled correctly:



Not arched

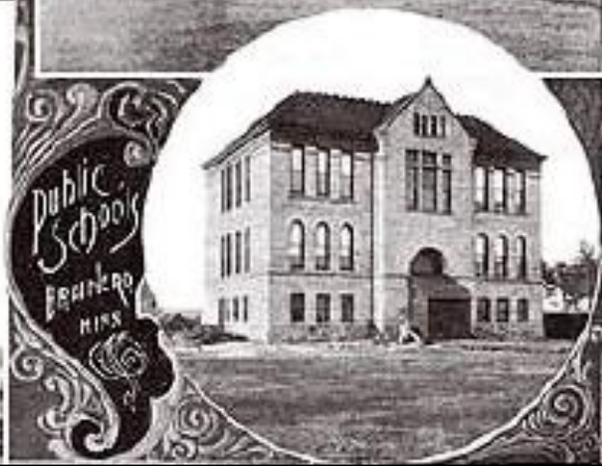
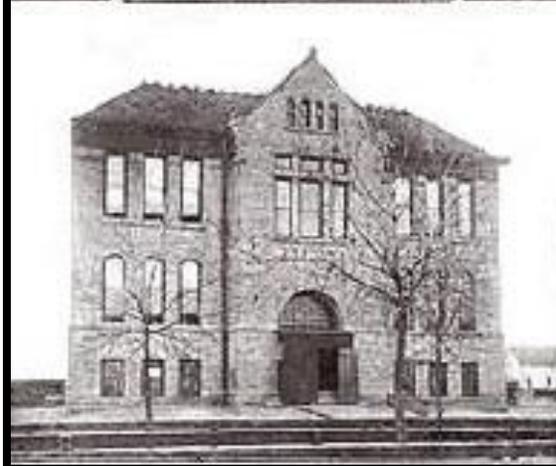
Square windows

Window arches on Lincoln and extra smokestacks

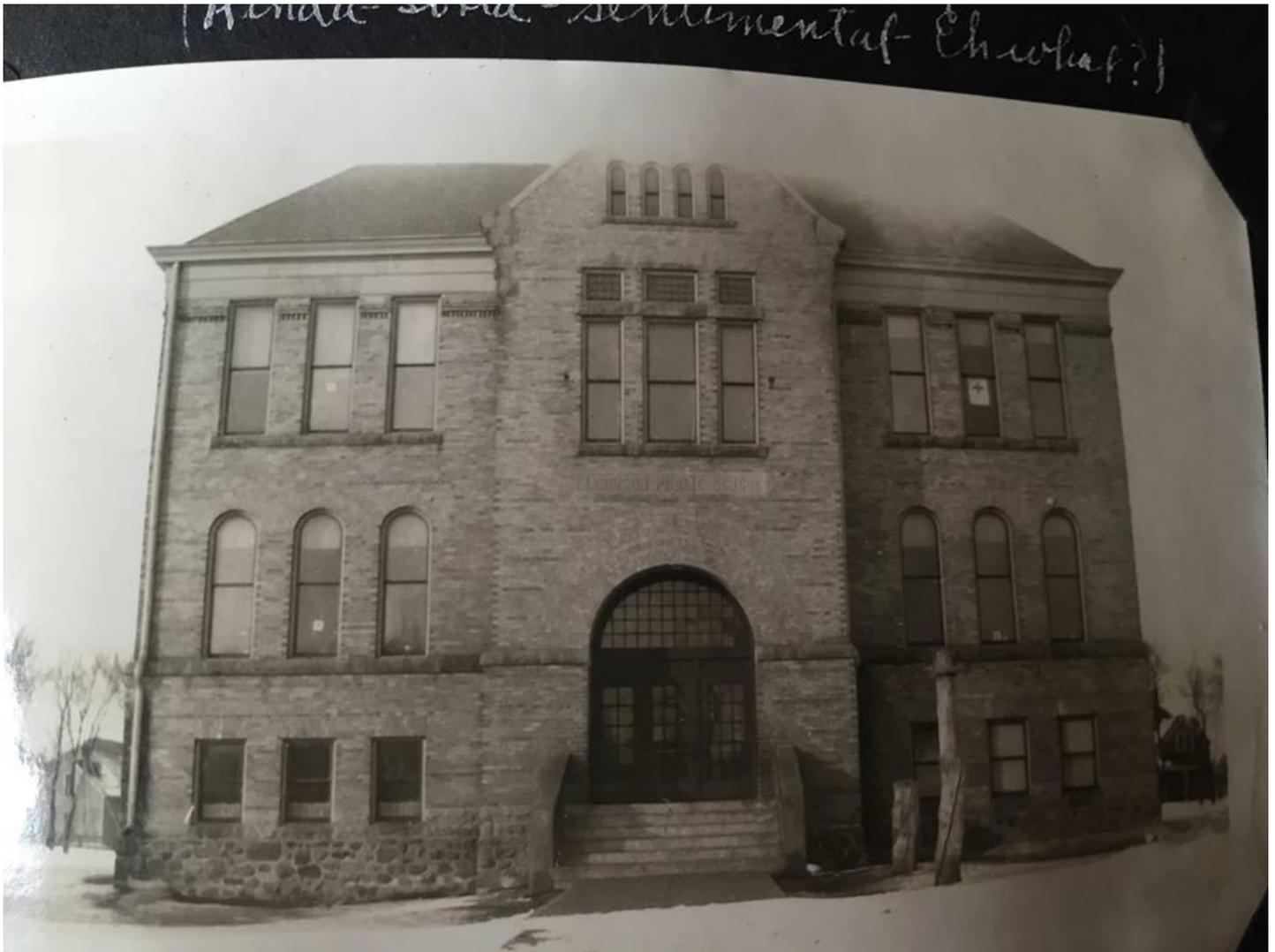


Lowell

Whittier



This is not Lincoln, rather Harrison, but they were all nearly identical less that window arch mentioned above. That chunk of stone could be a window sill or any part of that horizontal band. Photo credit: 1914-1921 Harrison School-Lynn Madison-2015:



**Here are my questions:**

- 1) **-Is this stone indeed sandstone?** It is used a lot in Duluth, such as in the Central High School building.
- 2) **-Where was the stone quarried?** St. Cloud is known for granite.
- 3) **-Why was this one lonely piece preserved?** As a bench for the playground monitor to sit on? Was it missed in the 1939 demolition and surfaced in modern times during some other construction such as underground piping or wiring?
- 4) **-What do we do with them?** It could go to the Outdoor Museum, but if that does not happen soon the stones would have to be placed somewhere in the meantime. If the school goes, the lot will likely be 90% blacktop. Plan B, I think the site should be properly marked as a historic site, preferably with a graphic marker with photos. These 2 pieces COULD act as the pedestal, the tall one as the vertical, and the short one the platform that could hold the plaque. It may look a bit imbalanced, or bottom heavy, however.

-Do you have any suggestions as to how to best display and preserve the school archives? For now, each school will keep their own items on site, as space is at a premium.

Photos from 1/5/2018, 11 below zero, incidentally. The long view is looking SW towards the high school. The pieces are near the oak tree:



Similar window sills from the 1904 Ransford Hotel:



**UPDATE, 1/9/2018:**

It dawned on me to see if the beast could be seen on a satellite image, so I googled it. This image was captured in July of 2014, and there appear to be 2 sections in the play area. So the stone was broken at least sometime between 2009 and 2014. If we can find someone that worked at the school years ago, perhaps as the outside maintenance person, or playground aid, we might get a bit of a **TIMELINE** on it! Maybe you played on this stone when you were a kid! Here it is so far:

**1893:** school is built

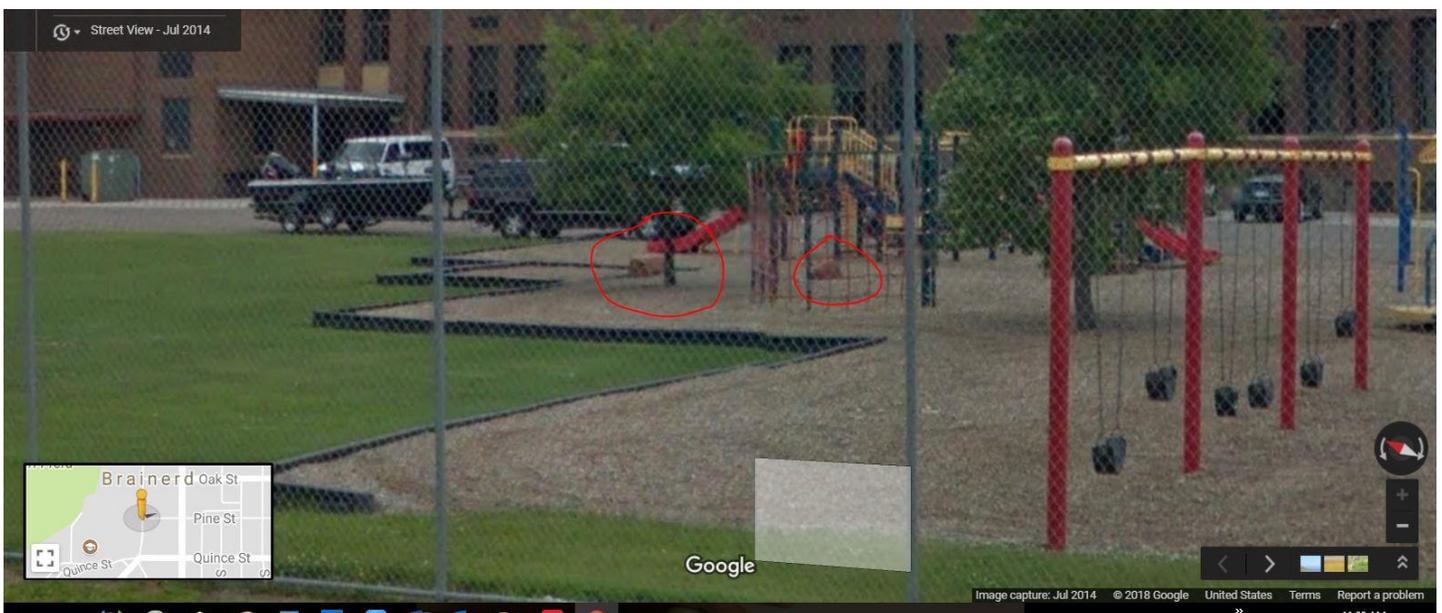
**1939:** the building is replaced, but one sill remains

**2009:** the window sill is photographed intact, just inside the play area, inches from the paved parking lot

**2009-2014:** sill is broken into 2 pieces, but moved farther SW

**2016 ca.:** I noticed the stone has been broken into 2 pieces

**2018:** pieces are put on a preservation list by *BPS Archives*



Too bad they didn't GPS the thing in 1939! You can see the 2 pieces have moved closer together. Maybe they are alive! Maybe they have feelings! 😊



The GOOD news is that John has arranged for the District to not so much “archive” these stones, but PRESERVE them. They are inventoried and on the radar and will be moved to a storage location on city property when the proper time comes.



-CWF, 1/4/2018; UPDATED: 1/9/2018