

A. O. Thomas Hall

In 1925, the Legislature appropriated \$85,000 to build a laboratory school building. The cornerstone was laid on March 20, 1926. Much of the construction was accomplished by Nebraska State Teachers College students under the direct supervision of Professor Verne C. Fryklund of the Industrial Training Department. (Contracts were let to build the tunnel to carry steam pipes to the building from the heating plant, and for the plumbing.) On December 6, 1926, President George Martin reported to the State Board of Education for Normal Schools that the approved construction was complete, and that the Training School had moved in, except for Grades Five and Six.

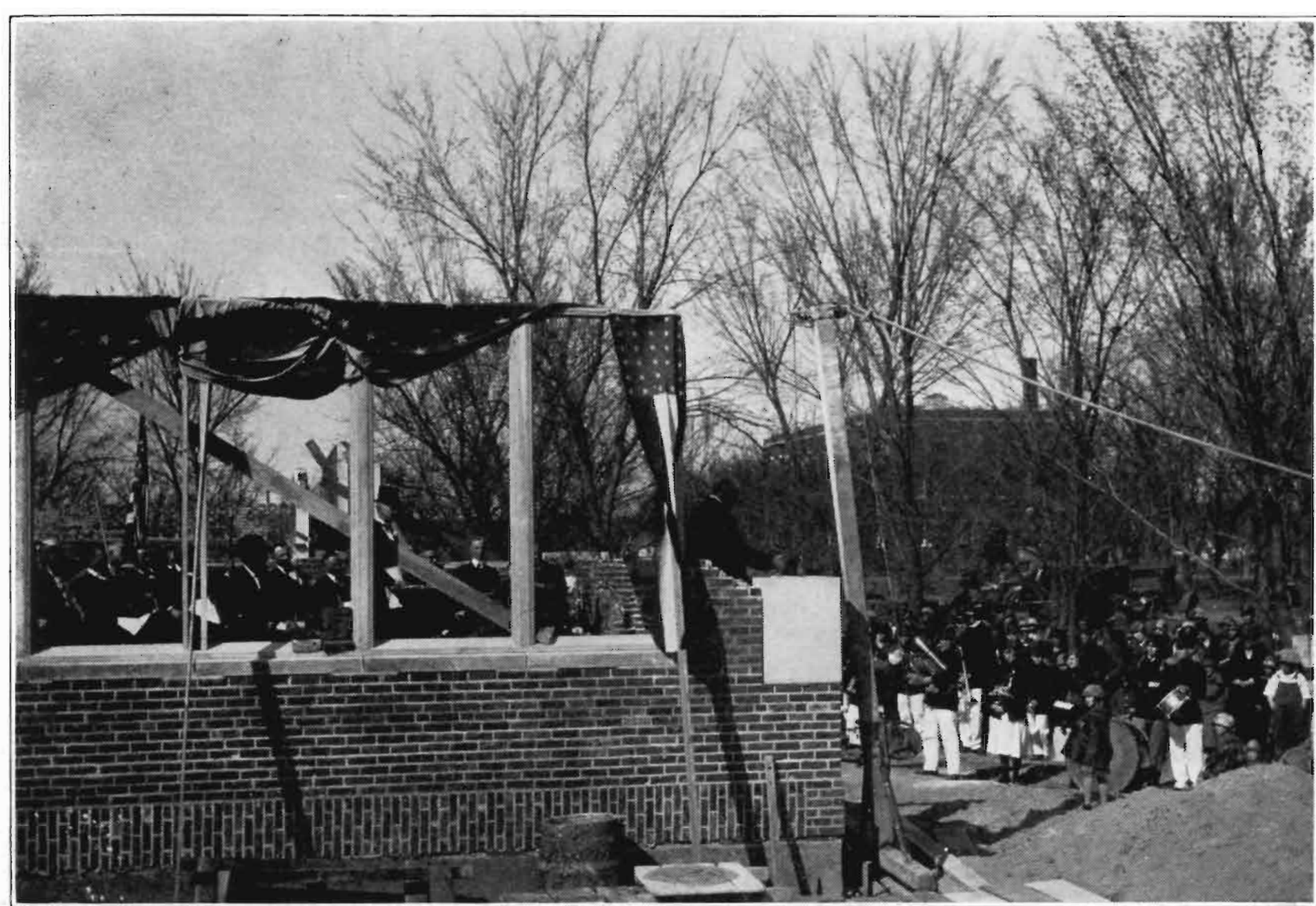
Classrooms designed to seat 20 to 30 children were 22 feet by 28 feet, with twelve-foot ceilings. Each classroom had a conference room where the “critic teacher” and the “practice teacher” could consult. The west end of the first floor housed a kindergarten for 60 children. As an integral part of the College’s mission to train K-12 teachers for the State, the school taught Kindergarten through Grade Twelve, and by 1935, 110 were enrolled.

On November 21, 1932, the State Board of Education for Normal Schools approved a request from the students and faculty that the building be named in honor of Augustus Orloff (“A. O.”) Thomas, the first president of the Nebraska State Normal School at Kearney, and the building became known officially as the A. O. Thomas Laboratory School.

Due to the Depression, the A. O. Thomas Laboratory High School was closed at the end of the 1938-1939 school year. Due to declining enrollment, the seventh and eighth grades were dropped at the end of the 1939-1940 school year. This left the School operating with Kindergarten through Grade Six.

The school was ordered closed in October, 1963, and closed for good at the end of the 1963-1964 school year.

The building was expanded and renovated in 1984, at a cost of \$902,000. A. O. Thomas Hall now (2009) houses the University of Nebraska at Kearney’s Departments of English, Journalism, and Foreign Languages.



Laying the Cornerstone of A O Thomas Hall, March 20, 1926



This Photograph of the Main (East) Door of A O Thomas Hall Appeared in the 1927 Blue and Gold. At That Time the Building Was Less Than a Year Old.



A O Thomas Hall as Seen From the Northeast, Before 11th Street Was Paved

Date Unknown, Probably Late 1920's

Note Child at Bush in Center



Juvenile Library in A O Thomas Hall, 1930's



A O Thomas Student Council, 1933-34

Front and Center, With Gavel, is President Ray Swayne

THOMAS TIMES

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ANNUAL STATE COMMERCIAL CONTEST DRAWS STUDENTS HERE TO COMPETE TODAY

Kearney College is Host
to Students Who Won
District Honors

The annual state commercial contest is being held today in the State Teachers College. Entrants in this contest are those who won places in the district contests.

Each district in the state holds a contest. The winners from each district represent their respective schools in the state contest today. A. O. Thomas entered contestants in every field of the district and placed thirteenth among the sixteen schools represented. Three of the schools did not place.

Zelda Day, who won fifth in novice shorthand, is the entrant from A. O. Thomas.

RECEPTION PLANS COMPLETE

The plans for the A. O. Thomas junior-senior reception, which is to be held, in the Eva J. Case Hall on May 13, are being made.

Special committees for entertainment, refreshments and the general reception have been appointed.

The cast for the one-act play, "The Burglary," has been selected. It will be presented as part of the evening's entertainment.

H. E. K. HOLDS MONTHLY DINNER

The Kearney chapter of the National Education Association held the monthly dinner at Green Terrace Hall, April 8.

The program following the dinner consisted of reports concerning the national convention recently held at St. Louis. The reports were followed by open forum discussion.

Members of the association, and school superintendents were present.

MR. BURR TAYLOR IS GUEST SPEAKER AT SPECIAL CONVO

Mr. Burr Taylor, representative of Nebraska Fire Prevention Association, addressed the student body at a special convocation, Wednesday, April 22. Mr. Taylor's speech was sponsored by representatives of the Kearney Fire Prevention Committee including Mr. Roe Gordon of the city fire department, Mr. Clem Heckelively, Mr. Carol Morrow, and a representative of Boy Scouts. Mr. Taylor urged education in fire prevention, stressing the dangers caused from cleaning clothes with gasoline, and careless smoking habits. He showed that there are few natural causes for fire, and he urged sensible control of "man made" fire hazards.

EIGHT SCHOOLS CONVEENE FOR TRI-VALLEY YEARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL

Programs of the Afternoon
and Evening are Well
Presented

The second annual Music Festival, which brought together eight schools in the Tri-Valley conference, was held Friday, April 17, in both afternoon and evening sessions.

The schools which were represented in the festival included: Elm Creek, Gibbon, Litchfield, Loomis, Overton, Shelton, and A. O. Thomas. Only the Wood River solo numbers appeared. The Cairo school representatives were not present at the festival.

The festival was not a contest, but rather a demonstration of vocal and instrumental work. Professor H. M. Fuhr, head of the music department of Hastings College, served as critic judge.

A. O. Thomas entered the primary grades, the girls' glee club, the boys' glee club, and the high school orchestra.

TEA FOR SENIOR GIRLS

May 23 is the date set for the annual A. A. U. W. tea this year. The invitation list includes the senior girls from A. O. Thomas and Kearney high school. Special guests will be the deans of these groups.



Main (East) Door, A O Thomas Hall, 1940's

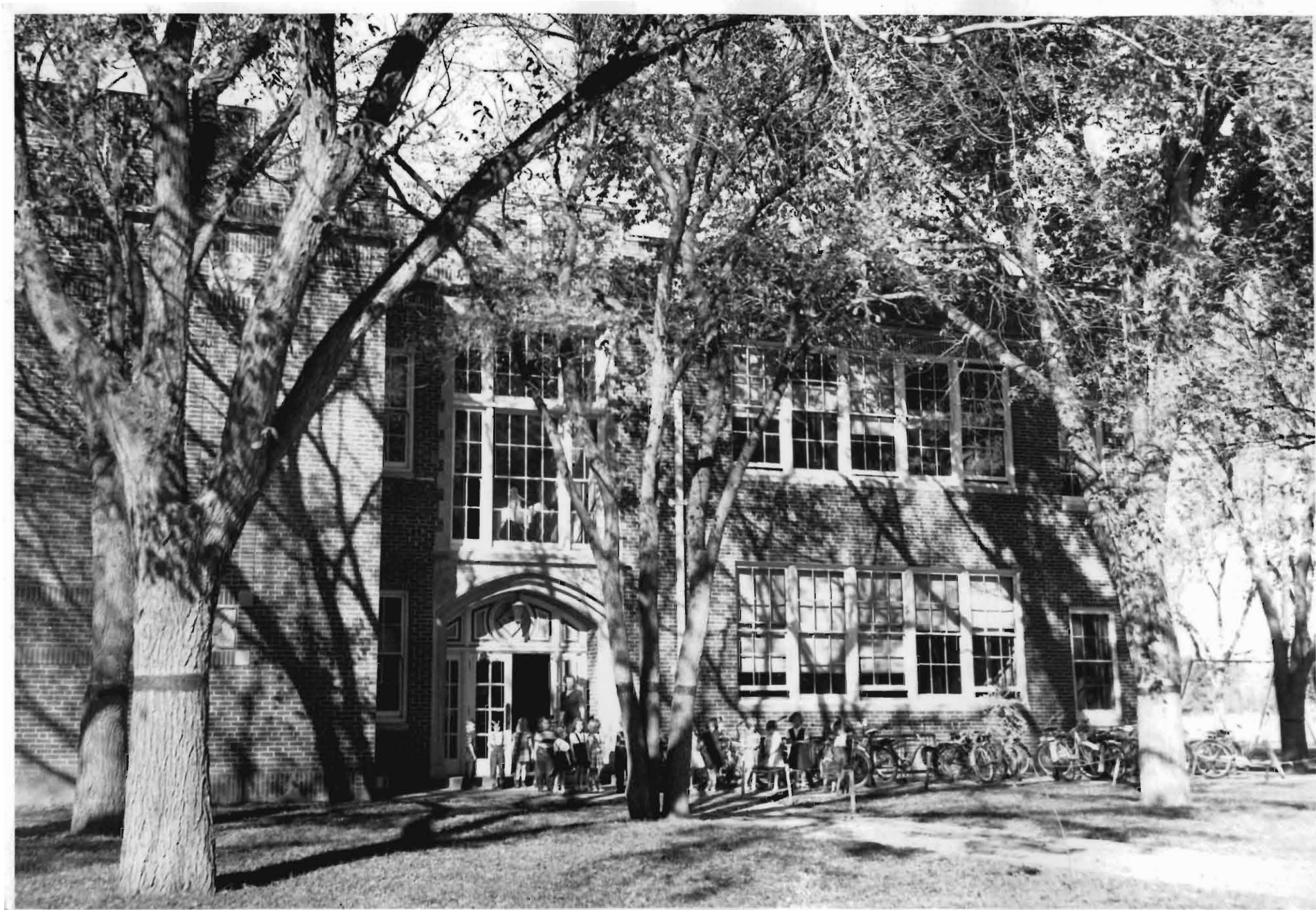


**Industrial Arts Class in
A O Thomas Laboratory School
Date Unknown, Late 1940's?**



A O Thomas Hall, 1956, Seen From the Southeast

The Sculpture Above the Main Door is "The Appeal To The Great Spirit," a Gift of the Classes of 1937 and 1939. The Sculpture Now (2009) Is On Display On the First Floor of the Hall



East Side A O Thomas Hall, 1958



Bike Rack at A O Thomas Hall, 1960

Note Fire Escape



South Door, A O Thomas Hall, 1961



East Elevation of A O Thomas Hall, 1966



Kearney State College President William R. Nester

Speaking at Dedication of Addition to

A O Thomas Hall, 1984

Mathematics Professor Charles Pickens Looks On



“Joan of Arc” by Henri Michel Antoine Chapu

On Display in A O Thomas Hall, Second Floor Hall

A.O. Thomas Hall From the Northwest, April 2009





A.O Thomas Hall From the Northwest, April 2009
This Western Addition Was Dedicated in 1984.



A.O. Thomas Hall, Main (East) Door, April 2009



A.O. Thomas Hall From the Southeast, April 2009

A.O. Thomas Hall From the
Northeast, April 2009





A.O. Thomas Hall, Showing the Eastern Part
of the Building From the Northeast, April 2009

Sculpture "The Appeal To The
Greatest Spirit". Gift of
the Classes of 1937 and 1939.
On Display in A.O. Thomas
Hall, First Floor.



Sculpture "Joan of Arc" by Henri Michel
Antoine Chapu. On Display in A.O. Thomas
Hall, Second Floor.





A.O. Thomas Hall Second Floor Hallway, April 2009



Sculpture "George Washington" On Display in A.O.
Thomas Hall, Second Floor.



A.O. Thomas Hall, First Floor Hallway, April 2009

A.O. Thomas Hall, Stairway to
Second Floor, April 2009



A.O. Thomas Hall South Elevation
From the Southeast, April 2009

