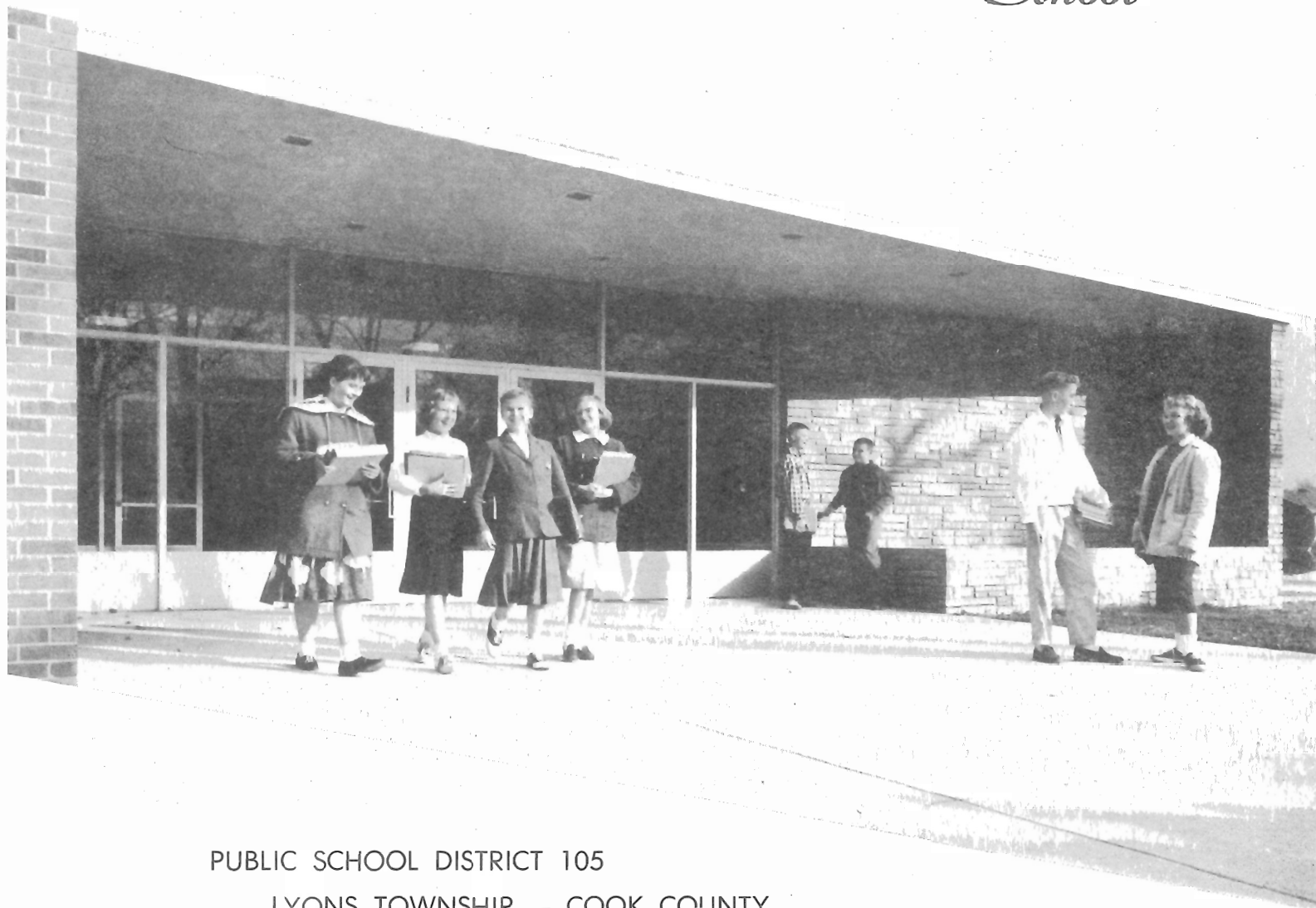


*The William F. Gurrie  
Central Junior High  
School*



PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT 105  
LYONS TOWNSHIP — COOK COUNTY  
LA GRANGE, ILLINOIS



## *This School*

Through these doors you enter the William F. Gurrie Central Junior High School of Public School District 105. Located at 1001 South Spring Avenue in La Grange, Illinois, it accommodates the seventh and eighth grade children in La Grange, south of 47th Street, the La Grange Terrace — Ideal School unincorporated area, the Village of Hodgkins and a portion of the village of McCook, all in Lyons Township of Cook County.

As a school structure, the William F. Gurrie Central Junior High School represents a splendid combination of modern architectural engineering and construction skills and of practical artistic ingenuity and resourcefulness. But the William F. Gurrie Central Junior High School, as a unit in the educational system of Public School District 105, is more than just a building. It, in fact, is the capstone in the evolution of the educational program and system of schools of the District. It is the culmination of a program long visualized and progressively projected by forward-looking citizens of a community — citizens who wanted and were willing to work to provide a sound educational foundation for the brightest future for their children.

In this respect, the William F. Gurrie Central Junior High School of Public School District 105 is representative of the will, the aspirations, the collaborative thinking and the cumulative tenacity and purposefulness of an entire school community — a community heterogeneous in geography but eternally one-minded in its desires and its ultimate objective.

It is fitting, therefore, that this booklet should be issued as a tribute to the many who, through the years, have contributed so much in time, thought and creative capacity, not only to the establishment of this Junior High School but, further and of even greater significance, to the consistent and continuing advancement of the educational system and standards of District 105.



## *Offices*

CENTRAL JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL



## *The Standard of Achievement*

The philosophy of education of this District 105 community encompasses the basic principle that our schools should be so organized that every child may develop naturally and attain maximum personal growth through participation in planning, execution and evaluation of his experience. And the heart and core of this philosophy is the provision of an opportunity for development of the individual to his fullest potential.

This philosophy, through the years, has been expressed in many words and in many ways by the people of this community. And with singular continuity they have provided the best physical plant and facilities, the best teaching staff, and the best instructional program and equipment that they can afford.

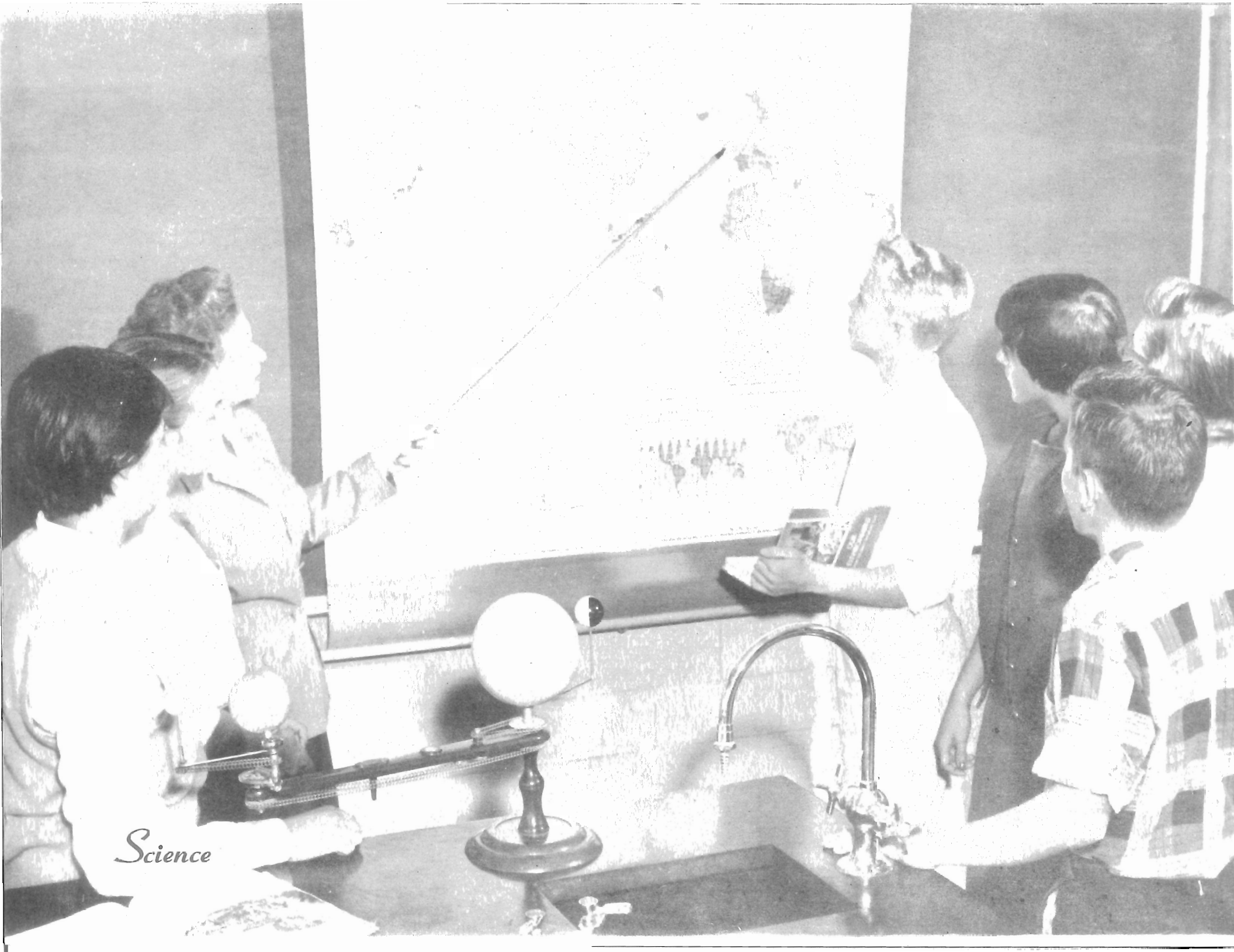
By this means this community fosters development of the essential basic skills — the three Rs, if you choose — and desirable attitudes, habits, appreciations and understandings during the early phases of the child's learning experience. In the intermediate grades the emphasis turns to strengthening, broadening, deepening and expanding these skills and to making the child more independent and self-reliant.

As the young adolescent reaches the Junior High School, he is ready to explore for himself, with the assistance of purposeful guidance and well-directed instruction, those areas of knowledge that crystallize his personality and give purpose and direction to his development — the language arts, geography, history, government, citizenship, science, mathematics, music, the fine arts, home economics, industrial arts, health, safety, and physical education.

It is in this latter area that the William F. Gurrie Central Junior High School has assumed and will fulfill the climaxing role in the educational advancement of the children of this District. It retains home-room instruction in some subjects but provides instruction in major subject areas by specially qualified teachers. In establishing this semi-departmentalized system the District 105 community has undertaken an effective bridging of the educational and personal adjustment gap between elementary school and the sharply different educational pace and instructional techniques to be encountered in high school and, additionally, in college.

Thus stated is our educational philosophy and our continuing goal. And as we have built so shall we continue to expand in accordance with experience and the community's demonstrated capacity for progressive educational achievement.





*Science*

# From the Beginning

The schools of a community are not merely structures of brick and mortar, or steel and wood. They are a reflection of the will, the faith, the aspirations and the personalities of the people who create them and who contribute in an ever changing scene to their growth and to the fulfillment of their purpose. History in this connection is but a sketchy note, a fading record of successive buildings and of only a few of the many citizens who have given of their time and energy that these schools should be and then should grow to meet the challenge of each succeeding year.

From very early School District records we find that this area first was known as District 4, in Township 38, Range 12. In 1844 a Margaret McNaughten taught in a little log school house located in what now is Lyonsville, at Wolf Road and Route 66. Margaret McNaughten became the wife of Samuel Vial and later taught her own children and those of her neighbors in her own home on Joliet Road near the present southeast corner of East Avenue and Route 66. Some time between 1854 and 1858 a little white school house was built at this location. It was known for many years as the "School at Skunk Corners," a name applied when some young prankster killed a skunk and nailed its hide to a fence board at the crossroads.

Hiram McClintock, "a very scholarly gentleman," served as teacher during the school term in 1861. After only one year at the school he joined the Union Army in 1862 and was this area's first casualty in the Civil War. Despite his brief stay, this schoolmaster had made a decided impression in the community and the Hiram McClintock Post of the Grand Army of the Republic was named after him. It was very difficult to secure teachers during these early years and judging by the

faculty spelling in notes and records left behind, they must have been very poorly educated. Salaries paid ranged from \$25 to \$45 per month, and in 1875 the teacher was paid \$55 per month for the eight month school term.

In 1886 Samuel Vial gave an acre for a new school site at the northeast corner of East Avenue and Route 66, and a "permanent school house" was built on this site. Another ten years passed and a one-room addition to the school was built to meet the needs of a growing population. Still later this two-room school was raised; a one story brick building was constructed and the two frame classrooms formed the second floor of the enlarged school house. Fire destroyed this building in March of 1918. Charles Conrad, who was then a school director, recalls salvaging some desks and books from one of the rooms while the Hodgkins Fire Department was fighting the blaze. The entire building was destroyed. School directors, facing the problem of finding temporary housing for the children, spent several weeks collecting old lumber and in constructing benches to accommodate the pupils in temporary quarters at Hodgkins and in two classes at the Thatcher farm house to finish the term.

Just a few days before Armistice Day in November, 1918, classes were resumed in a new school located about 40-50 feet back from where the old building had stood. It was known only as "the new school" until the spring of 1919 when County Superintendent of Schools Tobin made his annual visitation. Tobin termed it an "ideal" school for the rural community and the name stuck. Now outgrown and out-moded, this building still stands at East Avenue and Joliet Road.

Shortly after 1920, Hodgkins made a strong bid for

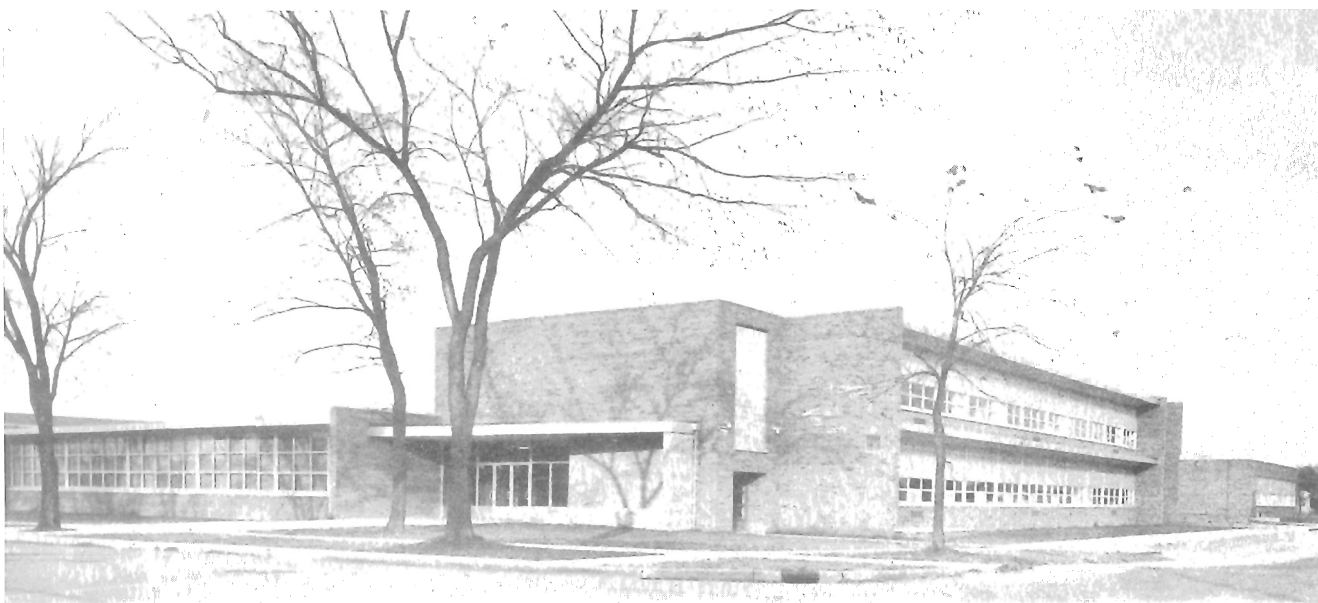
a school in their own community and a two-room building that now forms the original part of the present school was erected.

During the boom period in the late 1920's a four-room school had been built "in the prairie" at Seventh Avenue and 49th Street. The School Board of Directors at this time included Homer L. Furman, President, and Cole G. Lenzi and Fred Petges as members. Opinion of the community on this venture was divided and it was regarded by many as an unwise move. The area continued to develop, especially following erection of the Electro-Motive plant in 1935 and the population increased by leaps and bounds. In 1945 plans were made for the addition of eight rooms, a kindergarten and an auditorium-gymnasium to the Seventh Avenue School. This building program was completed in September, 1947, and a bronze plaque placed in the hall bears the familiar names of Kenneth Jensen, President, and Cole Lenzi, Lyman M. Hoadly, Albern Hollands, William E. Kroll, Ralph H. Potts and Elvin H. Skinnies as members of the Board of Education at that time.

By 1950, the school population of District 105 had increased from the recorded 279 in 1945 to a total enrollment of 728 children. Existing facilities at Ideal, Hodgkins and Seventh Avenue Schools had been overwhelmed and most classrooms were badly over-loaded. It was evident, further, that the entire community was experiencing a period of dynamic residential development and that any limited construction program would be totally inadequate to meet the emergency.

Responding to a citizens' recommendation that expert counsel be retained, the Board of Education asked Dr. William C. Reavis, noted University of Chicago consultant, to survey and make recommendations concerning the needs of the District. In consequence of this and other detailed studies, additional property was acquired and construction started on a new Ideal School on 58th Street, one block east of LaGrange Road, and on a second new school on Spring Avenue at 52nd Street in La Grange. At the same time, two classrooms and a gymnasium were added to the Hodgkins School. These new schools, planned to accommodate children enrolled in Kindergarten through the eighth grade in their respective attendance areas, were completed in time for use in the fall of 1952.

Within less than two years following occupation of these new buildings it became apparent to the community that even this construction program had been inadequate to match the rapid growth of the District and that new steps must be taken. A Citizens Advisory Committee was formed, Dr. Reavis again was retained and exhaustive new surveys were conducted. These studies resulted in renewal of earlier recommendations that all seventh and eighth grades of the District be consolidated in a new school and plans for the William F. Gurrie Central High School were evolved. The proposal was overwhelmingly approved by the voters in a referendum on March 17, 1956, and the new school, though not completed, was placed in use in September, 1957.



## William F. Gurrie

The story of Public School District 105 would not be complete without recognition of the exceptional contributions to its growth and welfare made by William F. Gurrie, for years District 105 school auditor and, since 1954, Lyons Township School Treasurer. Mr. Gurrie was not a native of this District. He was born in Chicago and, coming from a family of sixteen, he found it necessary to leave school early and to take a job as a bookkeeper. In the early 1920's he established his own auditing business.

As the depression of 1931 struck and deepened, Mr. Gurrie became deeply concerned about the financial plight of the public schools. School Boards were without funds to operate. Buildings were in need of repairs, teachers were being paid in tax warrants that were not negotiable at face value, though valid on paper. Teachers were struggling to find money with which to pay their day-to-day living expenses.

It was under these circumstances, in 1934, that Mr. Gurrie came to a Board meeting of District 105 and offered his help. Members of the Board of Directors were Cole Lenzi, Lee Bestler and H. L. Furman. After listening to Mr. Gurrie's ideas they hired him at \$15.00 per month.

Mr. Gurrie went to the La Grange State Bank and persuaded them to honor the tax warrants which would be redeemed in cash as rapidly as tax money came in. Teachers began to receive their salaries in cash.

Mr. Gurrie carried his idea to other banks in other school districts in the Township with similar success. He devised a system of monthly statements for the individual school districts to outline completely their monthly financial operations. In this way boards of education were kept informed as to income and expenditures and of what to expect in the way of available tax money.

Mr. Gurrie has worked unceasingly for the educational welfare of School District 105 and concurrently for many other school districts. He has been a moving force in helping to find solutions to many financial and legal problems. It is in recognition of his many major contributions to the cause of public education and of his help in the building and expansion of the school system of this and other districts that the new District 105 Central Junior High School has been named in his honor.





## *A Major Advancement*

In this presentation are featured many of the facilities in the new Central Junior High School that have made possible the introduction of major advancements in the educational program of School District 105.



*Library*



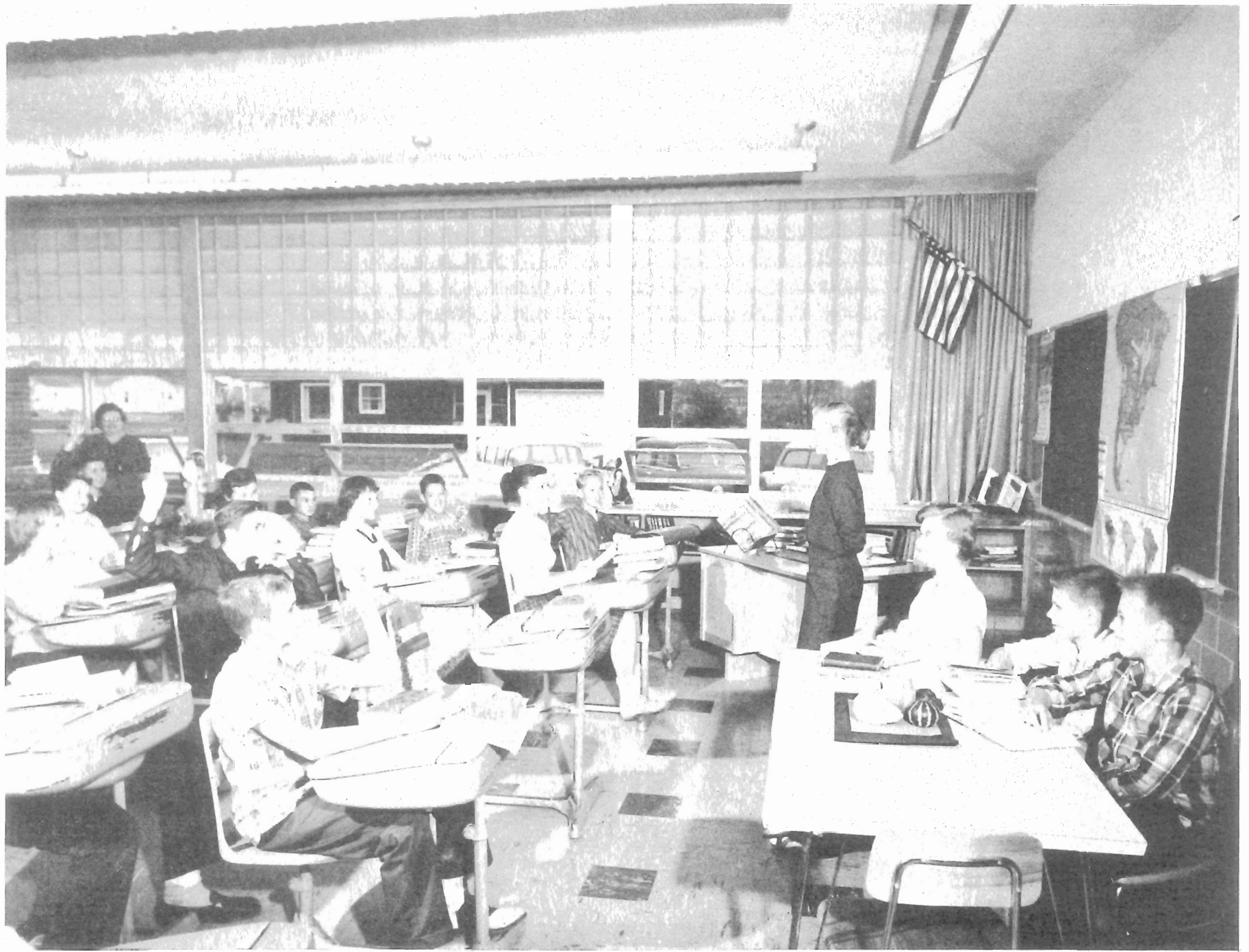
*Cafeteria*

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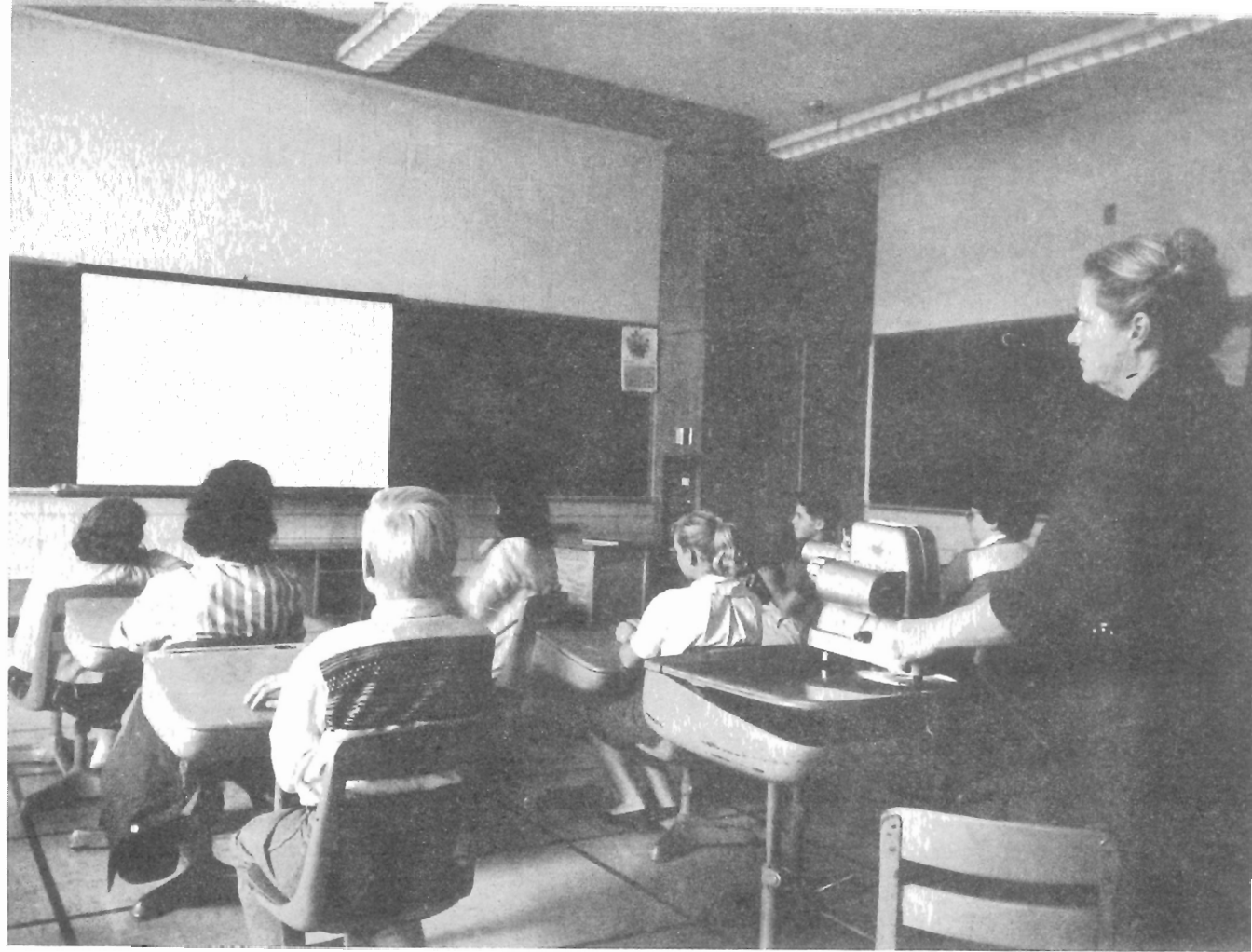
*Student Council*







## *Language Arts and Social Studies*



An innovation in the educational program of District 105 has been the introduction of specialized instruction in reading to accelerate reading capacities and to remedy reading deficiencies.

## *Reading Improvement*



*A Broad Educational  
Program*



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*Arts  
and  
Crafts*

*Food Class*



*Manual  
Arts*





Music



*Mathematics*



WILLIAM F. GURRIE  
CENTRAL JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

SCHOOL DISTRICT N° 105  
COOK COUNTY ILLINOIS  
ERECTED A. D. 1956-1957

MEMBERS WHO SERVED ON THE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
DURING THE YEARS IN WHICH THE BUILDING WAS  
CONCEIVED, PLANNED AND CONSTRUCTED:

HUBERT A. ARMSTRONG	RICHARD W. MELDON	CARL E. SHERWOOD
EDWARD H. KELLER	WILLIAM H. REININGA	ELVIN H. SKINNES
WILLIAM A. McCRACKEN	MILES C. SHARPLESS	HENRY B. TICE JR.

L. FAE COUCH: SECRETARY TO THE BOARD  
DAVID B. AURAND: SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS  
SAMUELSON AND SANDQUIST: ARCHITECTS-ENGINEERS  
LANGLOIS CONSTRUCTION CO. GENERAL CONTRACTOR