

2015 Landmark Award

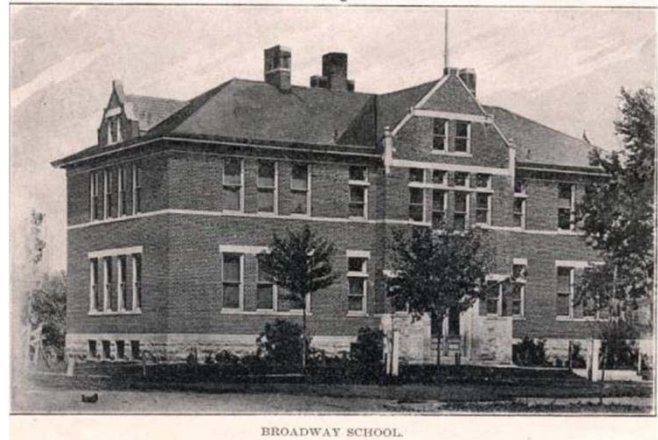
230 West Dunklin St

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
City of Jefferson, Missouri

Broadway School
230 West Dunklin Street
By Dr. Walter A. Schroeder

Because of severe overcrowding of the public school, Jefferson City voters were asked in 1903 to build three new neighborhood schools. The bond measure passed with an astonishing 94 per cent of the votes! Included in the plan to construct new schools was the building of a new Broadway School. It would replace an original, two-room Broadway School built earlier in 1891 on the Deeg lot on the northeast corner of Broadway and Dunklin. This new Broadway School, facing south, opened for classes in fall 1904.

The new Broadway School cost \$13,229 and was designed by prominent Jefferson City architects Charles Opel and Frank Miller. It was very similar in design, but not identical, to the West End and Fairview Schools of 1903. The plans for the two floors and basement of Broadway School were published in the 54th annual report of the state superintendent of



schools, evidently as an example of recommended construction for public schools in Missouri.

The school provided six rooms for six grades, but continued overcrowding forced a two-story addition to be attached to the north side, or back side, of the school in 1920. This addition was done so seamlessly that it is virtually impossible to recognize it as an addition. It added two more classrooms, an auditorium with stage, and a lunch room and kitchen in the basement, at a cost of \$7,282. Kindergarten was now part of the school's instruction. Broadway School served all of the Southside of Jefferson City until Central School (315 East Dunklin; now the administration building for Jefferson City Public Schools) was built in 1919. The first principal was Miss Lily Andrae, who spoke German fluently, an asset for the German-settled Southside then transitioning from German to English.

A playground of limited size surrounded the building on three sides. On the east was the boy's side, with a four-foot concrete wall forming the property line with the residence of Joseph Pope, who was Jefferson City's primary street and concrete contractor. On the west was the girl's side, adjoining Broadway Street, which carried horse-drawn buggies and wagons when the school was built in 1904. On the north side was an undersized softball diamond and high chicken-wire fence along the alley (Cedar Way) to keep balls from striking the Ben Humbrock (ca. 1873) house. Foul balls that went behind the batter's box bounced on top of the tin roof of the Pope's historic concrete-block garage (the garage is a contributing building to the listing of the Pope property for the National Register of Historic Places), and conveniently rolled back down into the waiting catcher's mitt.



An estimated 1,200 pupils passed through Broadway School during its 51 years as a school. Oral histories of Southside residents invariably comment on the school and the central role it played both in education and as a playground and neighborhood center. Annual chili suppers and school music and drama programs brought neighborhood residents into the school. During World War II the school

served the total war effort as the neighborhood collection point for newspapers and tin cans. Pupils diligently bought 10 cent saving stamps for war bonds from their teachers. The school served as the neighborhood distribution center for government-issued ration books of stamps necessary to buy meat, sugar, gas, and other rationed goods. The school served the neighborhood as a regular voting location for elections. It was a community center.

After World War II ended, Jefferson City again confronted the problem of overcrowded schools. Broadway School had class sizes of 32 pupils. Broadway School in particular faced the issue of playground safety on the busy corner of Dunklin and Broadway. Cars had long replaced horses and wagons on those streets, and the local newspaper helped the cause for new school construction by printing a front-page photo of a boy running into Broadway Street to chase a softball while cars were coming toward him. The school vote passed in 1953 again with an astonishing 93 percent of the votes! South School, four blocks south, was built to replace Broadway School. When Broadway School was finally closed on a snowy February 10, 1955, Miss Lily Andrae, the first principal who had proudly opened the school in 1904, was given the honor of locking its front door for the last time, a half century later!

The vacant building was sold to the Carpenter's Union in August 1955 for \$32,000 and since then has remained under ownership of the Union, or formally, the Carpenters District Council of Greater St. Louis and Vicinity. The Union has well maintained the building.

Broadway School is built in a definite Classical Revival style. The building is unpainted brick and stone, with a quarried limestone block foundation. The façade is symmetrical with tall, matching windows on both sides on both floors. First floor windows have stone sills and lintels. Second floor windows have a stone sill that encircles the building, breaking the tall height of the brick walls. The roof gable is the top of a central pavilion that extends the full two and a half stories and is slightly offset forwardly from the rest of the façade. At its sides are Doric half columns that identify the Classical Revival style. At the top of the doorway is a pediment with "1904." The four windows above the doors of the pavilion have an interesting radiating pattern dividing them into eight pie-like segments. The original doorway of wooden doors with transom was replaced with modern glass doors and fixed transom window by the Carpenter's Union.

Except for those glass doors, the exterior of the building is totally unchanged from its 1904 construction and 1920 addition. That is absolutely remarkable! Absence of change testifies not only to the excellent skills of master stone and brick masons and master carpenters, but also to having been built in an enduring, classical architectural design that fits in as well today with its neighborhood as it did one hundred years ago.

As for the interior, the Carpenters Union subdivided the former class rooms into offices with wooden partitions and dropped ceilings, but all the original class room and cloak room walls are intact. The unchanged, wide, divided, interior stairway in the entrance hall still has its original wooden steps, wooden banisters, and high posts. The former basement lunch room has several of the original ten-foot long wooden benches that pupils sat on to eat lunches in 1920.

The beautiful former school, agreeably set back thirty feet from the street by a lawn, is situated on a prominent street intersection of Jefferson City's Southside and thus highly visible to thousands of motorists and pedestrians every day. Positioned among well-maintained, century- old residences, it is one of the signature historic buildings of the Munichburg neighborhood.