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# Winner School History

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## Winner Schools-1900-1984

Posted with permission from the Winner Chamber of Commerce as a class project.

“Winner Schools.” *The History of Tripp County, South Dakota*, Winner Chamber of Commerce, Diamond Jubilee History Committee, Winner, SD, 1984, pp. 184–186.

### Winner Schools by Florence Hedlund, Frances Nelson and Lucile Mann

When Tripp County was organized in June 1909, it was divided into forty-two school districts. Written notices of appointment were received by the Board of Directors of School District No. 20, which included a congressional township. The appointees, Geo. W. Mitchell, chairman; Guy E. Shaver, clerk; and John E. Kisling treasurer, met at the New Lamro Hotel at Lamro, South Dakota, on July 15, 1909.

A bond election was held August 5, 1909, with 50 voters authorizing the school board to issue bonds in the amount of \$5,000 for the purpose of erecting a school building. There were no votes cast against the bond issue.

Subsequently, a two-story building was erected by Griffith and Griffith, contractors, for \$600; completion date was fixed at November 15, 1909. It was located in the southern section of township 99, range 77, which was on block three in the town of Lamro. Warrants were issued to pay for all the necessary expenses in readiness for the beginning of school. Desks and chairs were ordered, outhouses were built, stoves were purchased and also a ton of coal.

Matters were complicated when the railroad missed the town of Lamro, running its survey two miles north. The board voted to accept the schoolhouse as completed by the contractors on March 9, 1910. On June 22, 1910, a new school board, with P.O. Beaulieu becoming the chairman, staggering terms of one, two and three years were elected. One of the first matters of business was to fix a tax levy of 20 mills-15 for general fund and five for sinking fund. During their August meeting teachers were selected by ballot. A school term of eight months was to begin September 5, 1910, but Mr. Beaulieu was to look for rooms in Winner until such time that permanent quarters were provided.

The final decision was to rent the second story of the Sas building for the high school. It was located across the street west from the vacant lot north of what is now the KWYR radio station. The old schoolhouse on Block 17 was to be used for the primary school.

However, on September 2, 1910, a special election was held deciding whether or not to move the Lamro schoolhouse to Winner. The vote was 66 yes and 8 no. On January 9, 1911, the school board decided to close the Lamro school due to lack of pupils and to consolidate the same with the Winner school. The lowest bid of \$2,600 by J.L. Lynn was accepted by the board to move the Lamro schoolhouse to Winner. He was paid that amount by the use of various warrants and dates.

Due to the problem of overcrowded classroom the following term, other buildings must have been used, for in the December 7, 1911, issue of the *Winner Advocate*, the primary department was moved from the building west of the People's Café to the room adjoining the post office in the Butterfield and Barnum building. "This is steam heated and makes a very comfortable schoolroom for the little folks. They expect to hold forth there until the Lamro

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school building is placed in Winner, ready for school" states the newspaper. The latter part of March the intermediate department moved to the building north of M.R. Becks store. They occupied this room until an available location could be secured.

Another problem during this term was an inadequate supply of drinking water. An article in the school notes of the newspaper of February 8, 1912, stated: "Should some of the children of the primary and intermediate departments complain in regard to the drinking water, I wish to say to the parents, we try to do our part, but the water wagon fails to appear. Pupils may better conditions by getting a drink before leaving home. We will have water at the rooms every day if we can get it."

The Winner school opened on Monday, September 9, 1912. The large and up-to-date building which had been moved from Lamro the past winter and spring was now complete except for the installation of the heating system. The building had been placed on the southeast corner of a full block which had been designated as the school grounds. It was located one block west of the main street. All grades had better quarters all in one building instead of having to "hold forth in rooms in different parts of town as was the case last year."



The teaching force during the 1912-1913, school term included: Supt. H.W. Mayne of Flandreau, South Dakota; grammar department, Miss Aileen Wyncoop, Winner; intermediate department, Miss Charlotte Hilliard, Winner. The enrollment the first day showed 116 students; 38 high school, 33 grammar department, 28 intermediate department, and 47 primary. By October 17, 1937, more students had enrolled. There seemed to be considerable trouble with attendance. It was hoped that the installation of a large new bell would cut down on the tardiness.

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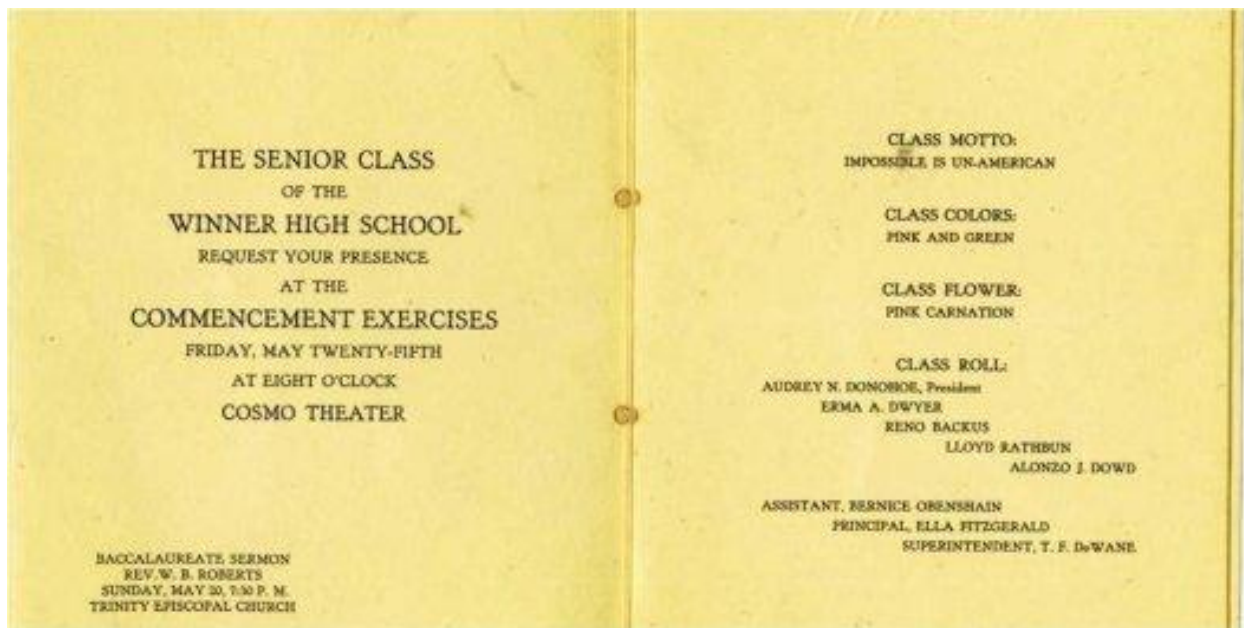
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Don Dailey reports that the enrollment was so large during the 1913-1914, term, that a two-room frame building was moved onto the southwest corner of the school grounds to accommodate the lower grades. Mr. Dailey attended his second year of school in that building. He states that after it was no longer needed, it was moved to the corner of Van Buren and 6th Street where it still serves as a residence.

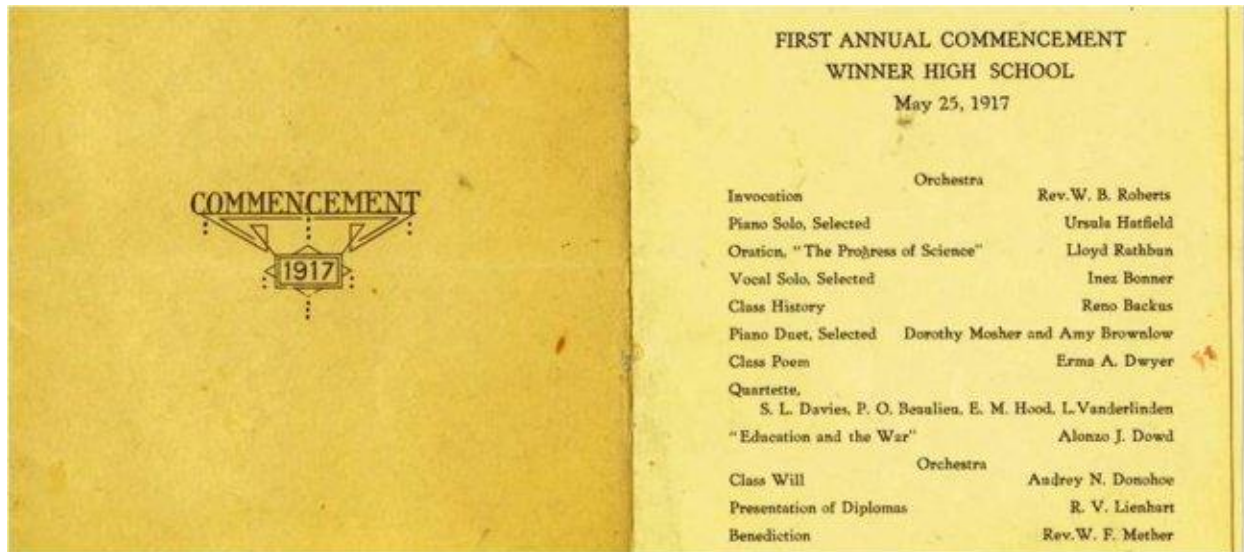
The second annual high school commencement was held in the Methodist Episcopal Church May 28, 1914. The program included several musical selections interspersed with orations given by each of the five graduates. Again, they must have finished a two-year course, as the enrollment of sophomores the previous September had listed five as the highest grade to be enrolled.

On March 10, 1916, the school board held a special meeting where it was decided to hold a bond election April 3, 1916, for \$38,000. This amount would furnish enough capital to erect the largest and most up-to-date school building in the Rosebud. They stated that the present building was in dilapidated condition, having been moved across the prairie from the old town of Lamro. The board issue for the new schoolhouse carried the election by a vote of 134 to 25.

School opened August 31, 1916, with the following faculty and the enrollment figures in parentheses: T.F. DeWane, Supt.; Miss Ella C. Fitzgerald, principal; Miss Bernice Obersham, high school, (45); Miss Lily G. Iverson, 7th and 8th, (27); Miss Amy B. Morris, 5th and 6th, (37); Miss Ruth Gannaway, 3rd and 4th, (56); Mrs. Frank Hafner, primary, (64). Many more students were expected to register within the next week. In the spring of 1917, five were graduated from Winner High School.



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The beginning of school in September 1917, was delayed until the 17th, as the new schoolhouse was not ready for occupancy until then. Lloyd Mengel, clerk of the board, stated that the new structure was modern in every respect. The following year manual training and typewriting, taught by Superintendent HE. McKellor, had been added to the high school course of study. The first four year graduating class finished in 1918. The first kindergarten class was also thought to have been held in 1918.

By 1919, the school population had increased so much that the board of education called for a special election which was held March 9, 1920, for the purpose of building a new \$75,000 grade school, to be placed on the northeast corner of the school site. Of the 173 votes cast, 161 were for the bond issue and 12 were against. Three contractors were hired to construct the new structure, Peter Kuipers, general contractor; C.S. Coonrod mechanical; and Kings and Dixon, architects. However, there seems to have been quite a delay in the work, for the classrooms were not ready for use until the fall of 1924.

In the fall of 1920, a book fee of \$1 was charged to each student. When teacher contracts were issued in the spring, they stipulated that teachers would be given up to two weeks sick leave. The substitutes, appointed by the superintendent, would be paid \$5 per day by the teachers. In the spring of 1921, Miss Dorothy Moser was hired as the first secretary for the principal and superintendent.

In the meantime it was necessary to find temporary quarters wherever possible. At the beginning of the 1921-1922 term, the board leased space in the Cameron building at the corner of Madison and 2nd Street where the junior high classes were held. The junior group had become so large by the second semester, it had to be split. Part of the group was sent back to the main building and they occupied the former sewing room.

At Winner High School advanced courses in home economics were added, as well as new science classes in the first three high school grades. A normal course could be taken by seniors, which upon completion, would yield a 2nd grade teaching certificate. Coaches were hired for both girls and boys athletics.



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In March of 1922, the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools granted full membership to Winner High School. That is a distinction which the school has been able to hold every year since.

Through the years, the Winner District has continued to expand and improve the quality of education offered youth of the community.

The physical plant in 1984 included the Central Grade School, built in 1924, the original building built in 1917, the Middle School Auditorium, built in 1951, Administration Building at 4<sup>th</sup> and Monroe, Westside Grade School (1956) on West Third, Eastside Grade School (1958) on East Seventh, Senior High School (1966) south of the Eastside Grade School, and the National Guard Armory (1970) to the east of the high school. The Armory was a joint effort of the National Guard, the school district, and the community, and is used by all three. It is used for many sports events, school concerts and commencement exercises, as well as other events such as the Farm and Home Show, etc. The senior high school home economics rooms are in the armory. The hot lunches are prepared here.



*Middle School (1917) and Central Elementary (1924)*

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*School Administration Building*



*Westside Elementary (1956 & upgraded 1996)*



*Eastside Elementary (1958)*

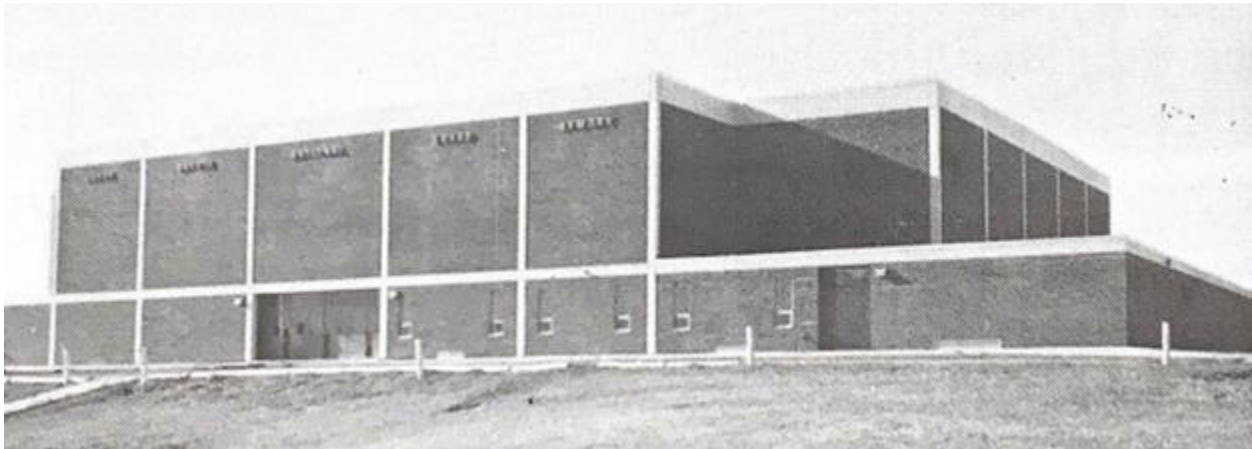
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*High School (1966)*



*National Guard Armory (1970)*

The Eastside and Westside schools offer kindergarten through fourth grade. Central school has first through fifth, also the elementary school library and offices for the Winner City Elementary Principal and Rural Elementary principal. Since 1982 the original building houses grades 6-8 and is called the middle school. From 1966-1982 it housed 7-8-9 and was called the junior high School. In 1992, the ninth grade was moved to the senior high building and sixth grade moved from Central Elementary to the Junior High building. Previous to 1966, this building was the high school building. The middle school auditorium classrooms are used for the special education classes. The auditorium is used for grade school sports, the plays, etc., put on by the high school drama department, and also the hot lunch meals are served here. The senior high vocational building housed the shop classes. The administration building has the offices for the superintendent and business manager and also the shop and home economics classroom for the middle school.

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The first kindergarten class was thought to have been held in 1918. The first four-year graduating class finished in 1918. The largest class to graduate was in 1971, when 143 students received their diplomas.

In 1972 the Winner School District was expanded to include a large number of rural districts through the central part of the county through the White River to the Nebraska border. In 1983, there were 16 rural schools in operation with an enrollment of 207 pupils and 23 teachers. There were 446 enrolled in the city elementary classes, with 26 teachers, 220 pupils in the middle school with 15 teachers, 280 students in the high school with 22 teachers.

The Winner schools have always offered quality education plus a variety of extracurricular activities. Sports have been stressed from the beginning with football, basketball and track. In recent years, volleyball, wrestling and golf have been offered, also. An athletic program for girls is offered, too. The Athletic Field, which is just west of the city part, features an all-weather track with the latest lighting system, and in 1983 the new stadium, built through the efforts of the Winner Quarterback Club.

The 1982 football team was the winner of the first annual football playoffs. The varsity teams in all categories have won many honors and are enthusiastically supported by fans of the community.

Other activities offered to Winner students are band, vocal music, Distributive Education, Pep Club, Warriorettes (girl's drill team), Future Farmers of America, Future Homemakers of America, Thespians, Smoke Signal (formerly Rodeo), Rodeo club (which sponsors the annual high school rodeo), safety council and debate oral interpretation. The student council has a weekly 15-minute program on the radio station KWYR.

## Winner Schools-to 2009

“Winner Schools.” *Tripp County Centennial, 1909-2009: Tripp County, South Dakota*, Winner Chamber of Commerce, Centennial History Committee, Winner, SD, 2009, pp. 348–352.

Winner Schools by Florence Hedlund, Frances Nelson and Lucile Mann, updated by Mary Fisher and Lynnelle Anderson

Through the years the Winner District has continued to expand and improve the quality of education offered youth of the community.

In 1970, the National Guard Armory was built to the east of the high school. The Armory was a joint effort of the National Guard, the school district and the community; and is used by all three. It is used for many sports events, school concerts and commencement exercises, as well as other events, such as the Farm and Home Show.

According to the Winner Advocate in 1994: “On March 29, voters in the Winner School District approved a bond issue to build a new middle school downtown and a new elementary school at the West Elementary site. On a 4-2 vote, the Winner School Board has decided to move the football field and build the new Elementary School on the current field. At Monday’s meeting, Bruce Bailey of Design Associates of Lincoln, Neb., said it would not cost more to move the football field and track to an area south of Winner High School. He presented figures



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showing the estimated cost of the move to be \$254,000. A breakdown of the costs includes: new track surfacing, \$60,000, new sprinkler system, \$40,000, grading/earthwork, \$74,000, field drainage system, \$50,000, foundations (bleachers) \$12,000, seeding, \$4,000, Lighting, \$14,000. The superintendent, Mike Elsberry, added construction plans call for the new elementary school to be built first and then the middle school.”

In 1995, the football stadium, which was in two sections, was moved south of the high school. The new elementary school was built on the old football field site in 1996.

September 12, 1996, the Central school burned to the ground. The fire started about 4:15 a.m. and the firemen ended the same day around 9:00 p.m. A total of about 600,000 gallons of water was used for the fire. The building had stood for over 70 years and was scheduled for demolition the week it burned. In December 1996, the owl from the old high school with the inscription, “The Wise Old Owl!” was taken off and put on the new middle school.



This hand carved limestone sculpture looked out over students of the original Winner High School from 1917 until 1966. It was salvaged from the demolition of the building in 1995, and again serves as a symbol of excellence in education.



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The Owl was restored by Harry V. Jorgensen and the 1996 class members dedicated this memorial in December of 1996. They dedicated it to all students past, present, and future, and to the teachers who continue to prepare and inspire Winners young people to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

## **Recent History of the School**

The Winner School District, under the direction of Superintendent Mike Hanson enrolls over 800 students in both city and rural schools. Two rural schools, Millboro, led by Principal Judy Audiss, and Hamill, led by Special Education Director and Principal Bill Kaiser, are still open and both have enrollment numbers in the upper teens. In 2007, the administration offices moved from the Middle School into the newly remodeled Eastside building which also houses the high school math classes.

In recent years the Winner School District has undergone many positive changes. In 2005, the Winner High School went through a 1.2 million dollar renovation. This included new lockers, windows, a new fire alarm system, new lighting and a geothermal heating and air conditioning system. The Winner High School, under the leadership of Principal Gerald Witte, is proud to offer their students state of the art technology which was part of the Governor's 21st Century Technology Skills Focus. In 2007, the one-to-one laptop initiative brought wireless laptop computers to the high school for each student and teacher, and Smartboard Presentation Technology was made available to all teachers in the classroom. Advanced curriculum college board courses are taught at Winner High School to give students college credit, and a wide variety of curriculum is offered to meet the varied needs of all students.

The Winner Middle School, under the leadership of Principal Brian Naasz, is also a state of the art school with new security cameras and Smartboard Presentation Technology in some classrooms. There are three computer labs available to accommodate all students, the majority of

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them with laptop computers. The gym has recently been renovated with wireless technology, and a new sound system. In 2001, the 5th grade classrooms were moved from the Winner Elementary to the Winner Middle School which brought changes but many additional opportunities for students in grade five. The curriculum at the Winner Middle School is strong and varied to accommodate and offer all students excellent learning opportunities.

Extensive changes in the trends utilizing technology for education begin at the elementary school with computer labs, classroom computers and some interactive Smartboards. In the 2005-2006 school year, Winner Elementary School began offering Begindergarten classes and now houses grades Begindergarten through 4th grade. Under the leadership of Principal Judy Audiss, the school maintains a high quality of excellence and was given the honor of being a "Highly Distinguished School" by the South Dakota Department of Education for many years due to their excellence in state assessment scores. The Winner Elementary currently houses a regional Reading Recovery site and educators from many different districts visit the school to be trained in Reading Recovery, a nationally recognized reading program.

The district is now fully accredited by the North Central Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement. The NCA program is an on-going school improvement process that ensures that a school's curriculum is sound and rigorous and that the district goes beyond state requirements and is accountable for meeting nationally recognized standards of excellence.

The administration, faculty and staff of the Winner School District are proud to be a part of the Centennial celebration and look forward to many more years of serving the children of our community with excellence in education.

Winner School superintendents have been:

H.W. Mayne (1912-1916); T.E. De Wane (1916-1918);  
HE. McKellar (1918-1920); FW. Reeves (1920-1922);  
C.C. Miller (1922-1929); J.W. Poynter (1929-1937);  
J.W. Headley (1937-1940); Martin Williams (1940-1946);  
E.L. Holgate (1946-1948); James Slocum (1948- 1950);  
A.L. Martensen (1950-1951); Wayne Brower (1951-1954);  
A.L. Alberts (1954-1966); Darwin Tessier (1966-1973);  
Robert J. Olson (1973-1980); Jay Ruchdashel (1980-1985);  
Arnold Wold, resigned 1991, Donald Clays, interim, (1985-1992);  
Mike Elsberry (1992-1997); Dr Gary Spawn (1997-1999);  
Dave Nicholas (1999-2001); Mary Fisher (2001-2008); and Mike Hanson (2008-2010);  
Bruce Carrier (2011-2016); Keven Morehart (2017-Present).

Winner School secretary and business managers have been: Dorothy Moser, first secretary, (1921-1937); Dorothy Kares (1937-1940); Marie W. Nielsen (1940-1945); Iris Achenbach (1945-1952); Mary Schoemaker (1952-1972); Barbara Kocer, first business manager, (1972-1979); Dan Viedt (1979-1983); Linus Storms (1983-1997); Phillip Husher (1997-2007); and Laura Root (2007-present).

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## Bibliography

“Winner Schools.” *The History of Tripp County, South Dakota*, Winner Chamber of Commerce, Diamond Jubilee History Committee, Winner, SD, 1984, pp. 184–186.

“Winner Schools.” *Tripp County Centennial, 1909-2009: Tripp County, South Dakota*, Winner Chamber of Commerce, Centennial History Committee, Winner, SD, 2009, pp. 348–352.

For more information and pictures of schools in Tripp County, please check out this site:

<http://genealogytrails.com/sdak/tripp/schools.htm>