

CRITTENBERGER SCHOOL

In 1950, Congress passed laws to create the Department of Defense (DoD) Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools (DDESS) and consolidate funding and operations of schools on installations nationwide.

Ft. Knox Dependent School hired Louisville architecture firm Otis & Grimes to design its first school using financial aid enabled by the law. With the same funding source, Ft. Campbell's Lincoln Elementary was also built with a similar design.

On November 1, 1951, Jack Roberts Construction Co. began building the half-million-dollar elementary school overlooking Dixie Hwy (U.S. Route 31W) and Chaffee Ave. Bridging the Classical Revival style of the pre-war generation with the Modernist style of the post-war, it was a low-slung, one-story, concrete and brick school with a modified T-plan and flat roof, but had a traditional classroom plan and symmetrical temple form at the center of the façade. The school's "modern features" included green blackboards and ribbon windows to provide more natural light into classrooms.



When the U.S. military desegregated in 1948, White and Black students attended the same schools at Ft. Knox, while the rest of Kentucky did not integrate until 1954 or later when nationally mandated. On August 16, 1952, 630 White and Black students enrolled in pre-kindergarten through 3rd grade at Crittenger School, pictured above.



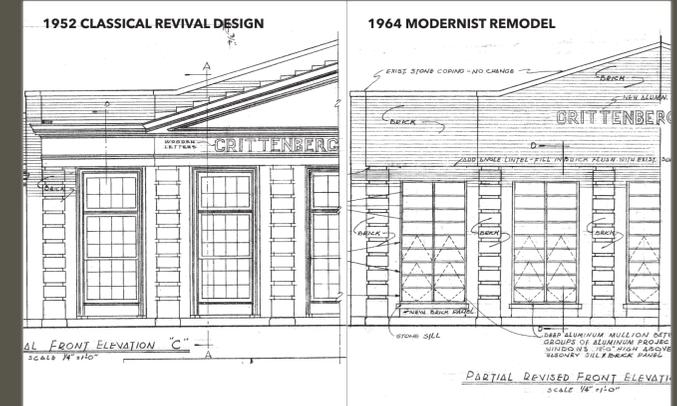
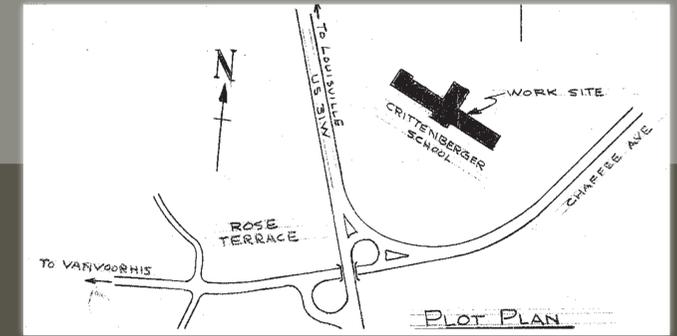
1950s postcard of the new Crittenger Elementary School and Goldville Housing, where many students lived immediately north of the school. In April 1955, 980 Ft. Knox students received the first polio vaccine in Kentucky, administered for free at Crittenger School.

The Northwest Wing contained 5 classrooms, the Boiler Room, Visual Aids Room, First Aid Room, storage, Boys' and Girls' Restrooms, 2 exits, and a large All Purpose Room with stage. The Southeast Wing contained 10 classrooms, Boys' and Girls' Restrooms, storage, and 3 exits. The Northeast Wing contained 4 classrooms, storage, and an exit. By 1968, an addition that looked like a tail wing on a plane was added off the NE exit.

Behind the Southwest temple-form façade was an octagonal Lobby, where 7 triangular rooms flanked 7 hallways. 3 lead to classroom wings to the NW, NE, and SE; 2 to the front lawn to

the W and S; and 2 to parking lots to the N and E. Between each hall, doors lead to the Library to the SW, the Receptionist's Office and a storage room to the SE, the Men's and Ladies' Rooms to the NE, and a storage room and Supply Store to the NW.

Crittenger served as an elementary school until 1996. Then until 2017, Kentucky District Superintendent's Office for Department of Defense Education Activity) occupied it. Located outside of the Cantonment Historic District, it was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, because it was one of the first schools built under Laws 81-815 and 81-874.

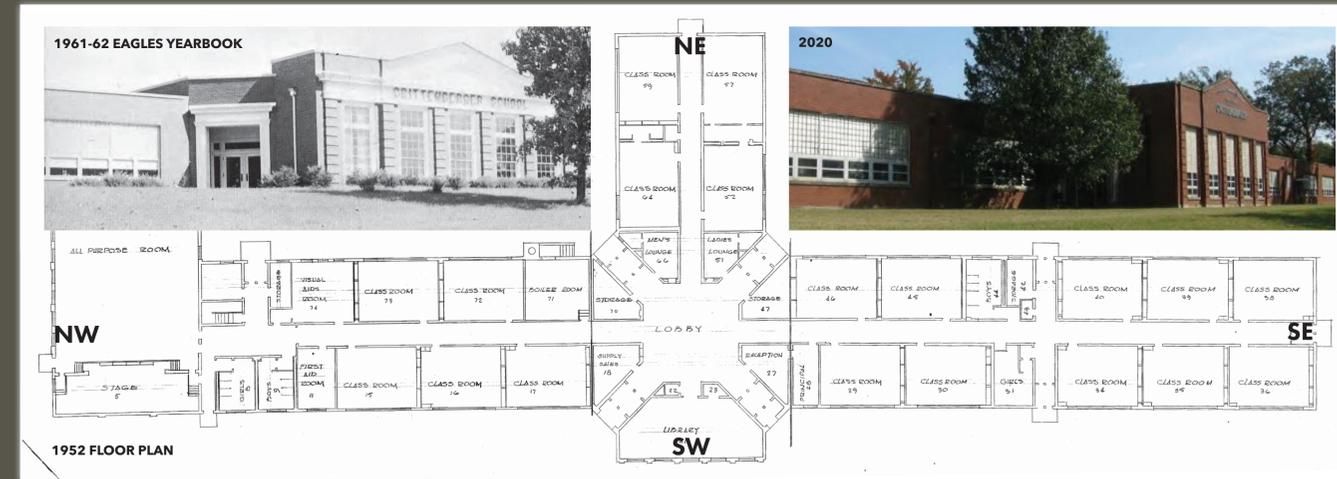


In 1964, the façade was altered to remove Classical Revival features to match the mid-century Modern schools built after Crittenger.



Corp. Townsend W. Crittenger attended Ft. Knox Dependent Schools 1936-38 and 40-41. When the U.S. entered World War II in 1941, he joined the Army and served as an instructor in the Armored Replacement Training Center until he went overseas with the 745th Tank Battalion. He was killed in action near Oberpleis, Germany on March 22, 1945.

His father, Lt. Gen. Willis D. Crittenger (1890-1980), and brothers, Lt. Col. Willis D. Crittenger, Jr. (1919-2014) and First Lt. Dale Jackson Crittenger (1927-1969), attended the ceremony as did other dignitaries. Dale Crittenger unveiled a photograph of his late brother. He later died in a helicopter crash in Vietnam in 1969.



Students also lived in the new Rose Terrace Housing community west of Dixie Hwy (31W), pictured above. A path was constructed under the road for children to walk to school. When photographed by plane in 1968, Goldville Housing was already demolished, yet the street patterns remain behind Patton Museum.



FORT KNOX EST. 1918
HERITAGE TRAIL

