

# Hammer-wielding Ex-pupils 'Bash' Old

By KIRK MARTIN

The old Clarkston School was severely damaged by vandals with sledgehammers last week as city, DeKalb County and police officials stood by to watch.

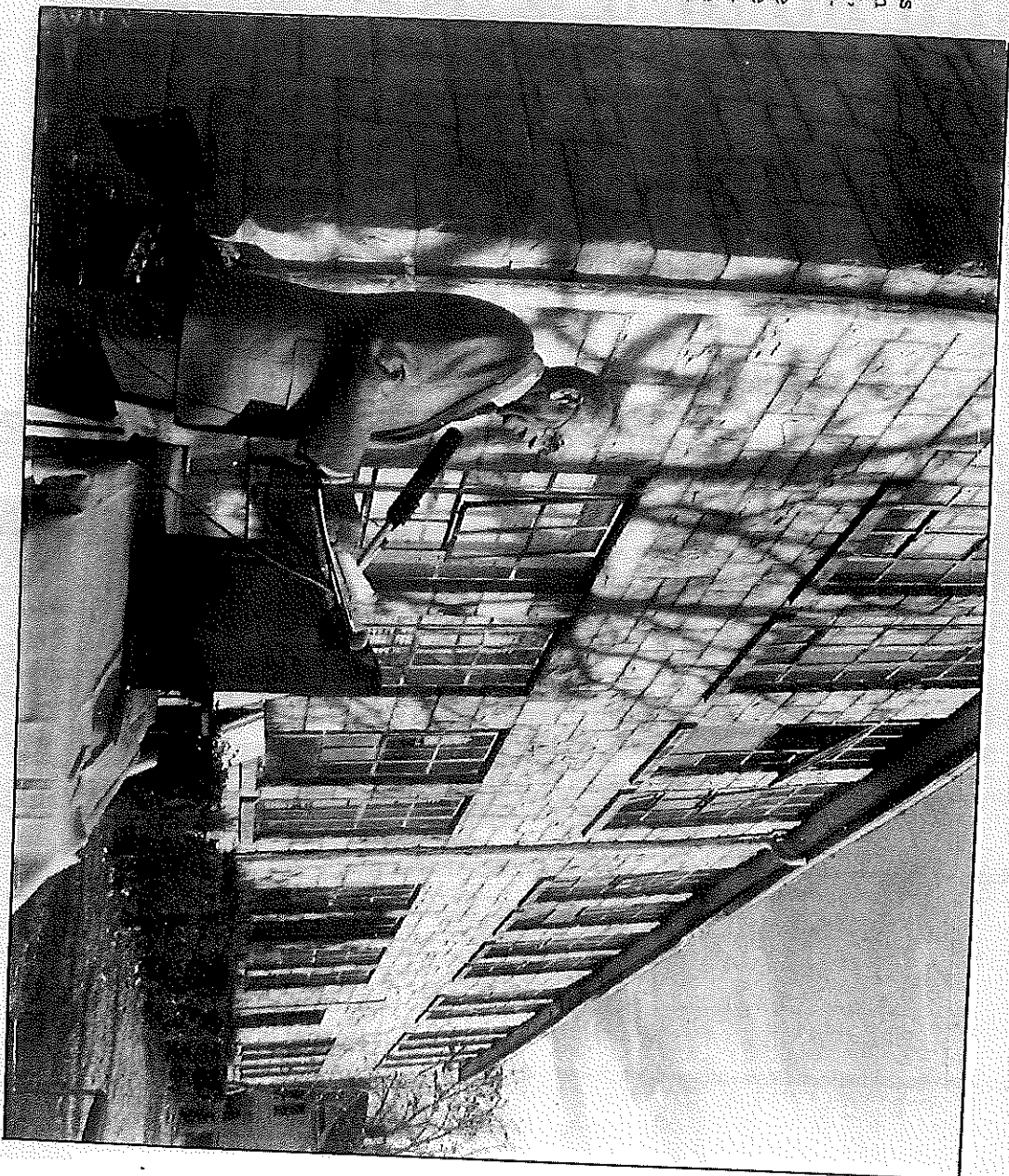
In fact, few people may have been happier to see the damage than Barbara Loar, DeKalb Library director, who will replace the old granite school building with a new 10,000-square-foot branch library. She even lifted a hammer herself in the more unusual of a flurry of groundbreaking ceremonies this fall for new projects in the library system's bond-financed \$29 million expansion program.

"I realize it is a bittersweet day for all of you," Dr. William C. Brown, library board chairman, said to former Clarkston School students in the small crowd gathered for the "Building Bash."

Ken Jones of Libburn, a first-grader at the school in 1944, was reviewing a few memories as he worked to free a souvenir door-knob from the entrance to a paint-flaked, empty classroom on the second floor. "It looked a lot better then. You come in a place like this and you have flashbacks."

Among other things, Jones remembers, a large persimmon tree once grew at the edge of the schoolyard and students would raid it of its astringent fruit. "I liked the ripe ones."

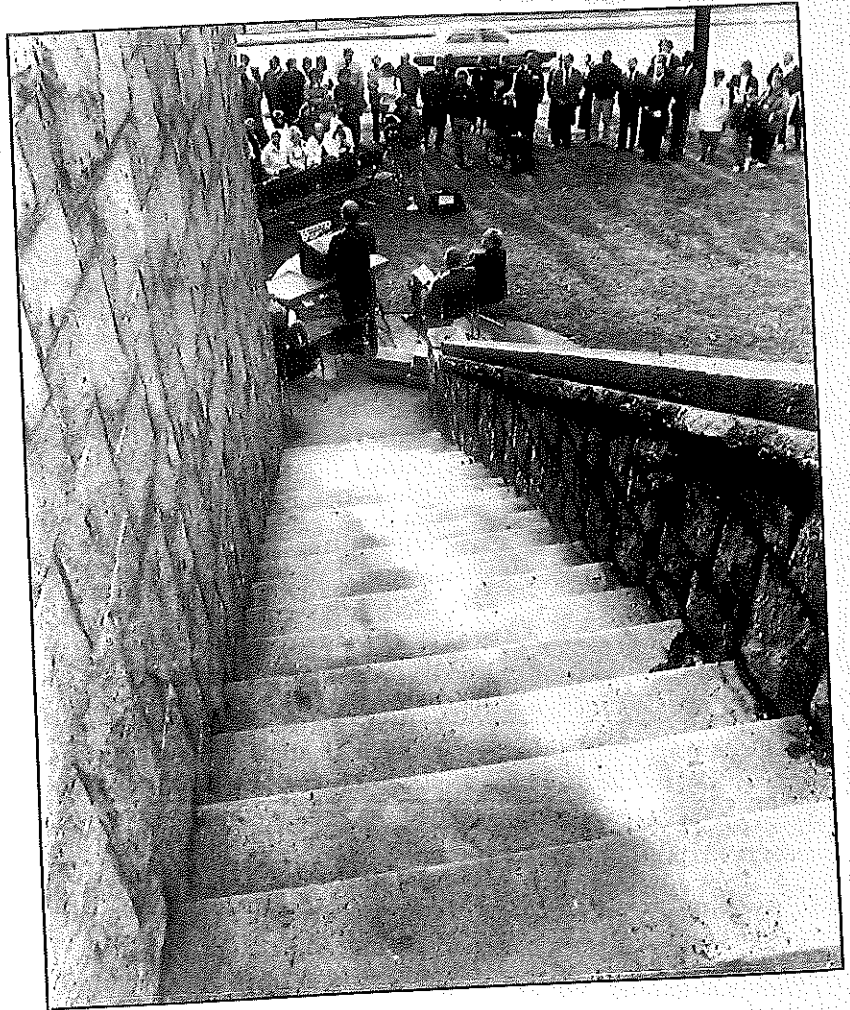
Ben Kight started at the school in 1937, the year after it opened. He pointed through one of the grimy windows to where ashes from the school's boiler were once dumped. Each spring, he remembers, the "machoest" of his schoolmates would prove their bravery by walking across the cinder pile on soft, bare feet after wearing shoes all winter.



Dr. William C. Brown, DeKalb Library Board chairman, calls planned demolition of former Clarkston School "a bittersweet day." The gran-

ite building will be razed to make way for a new 10,000-square-foot library branch with room for 38,000 books.

# Clarkston School



Farewell ceremony for old granite school building drew a crowd, including many former students.

Linda Rakestraw met her husband, Gary, at Clarkston School and was among the last class to graduate in 1964. "All our lives are in this school," she said.

Her husband chose a doorknob as a souvenir. She found the most curious artifact of the day, the remnants of a chipped, green glass light fixture that had been forgotten in a closet.

A few former students took advantage of the sledgehammers offered by library officials to dislodge more substantial mementos from the granite blocks and plates that formed the bannisters on the double stairways at each end of the school.

A library employee worked three days with a hammer and chisel to remove the school's cornerstone, a library spokesman said. It will be displayed in some way in the new library.

Magazine pictures, newspaper clippings and assorted notices were still clipped to walls and bulletin boards as former students toured the haggard building last week. A plastic turtle shell and a photo of a young man in an Army uniform lie forgotten on a shelf. Italian phrases for the trash survive on a chalkboard. Lost, not beyond guessing, is the meaning of a chalkboard notation "5 more days."



Linda Rakestraw makes surprise find of a light fixture in a closet at Clarkston School. She met her husband in the old granite building.



Library Director Barbara Loar takes her own shots at the school.

**NEWSphotos**  
**By**  
**Kirk Martin**



**Gary Rakestraw claims souvenir doorknob at Clarkson School.**

December, 1986

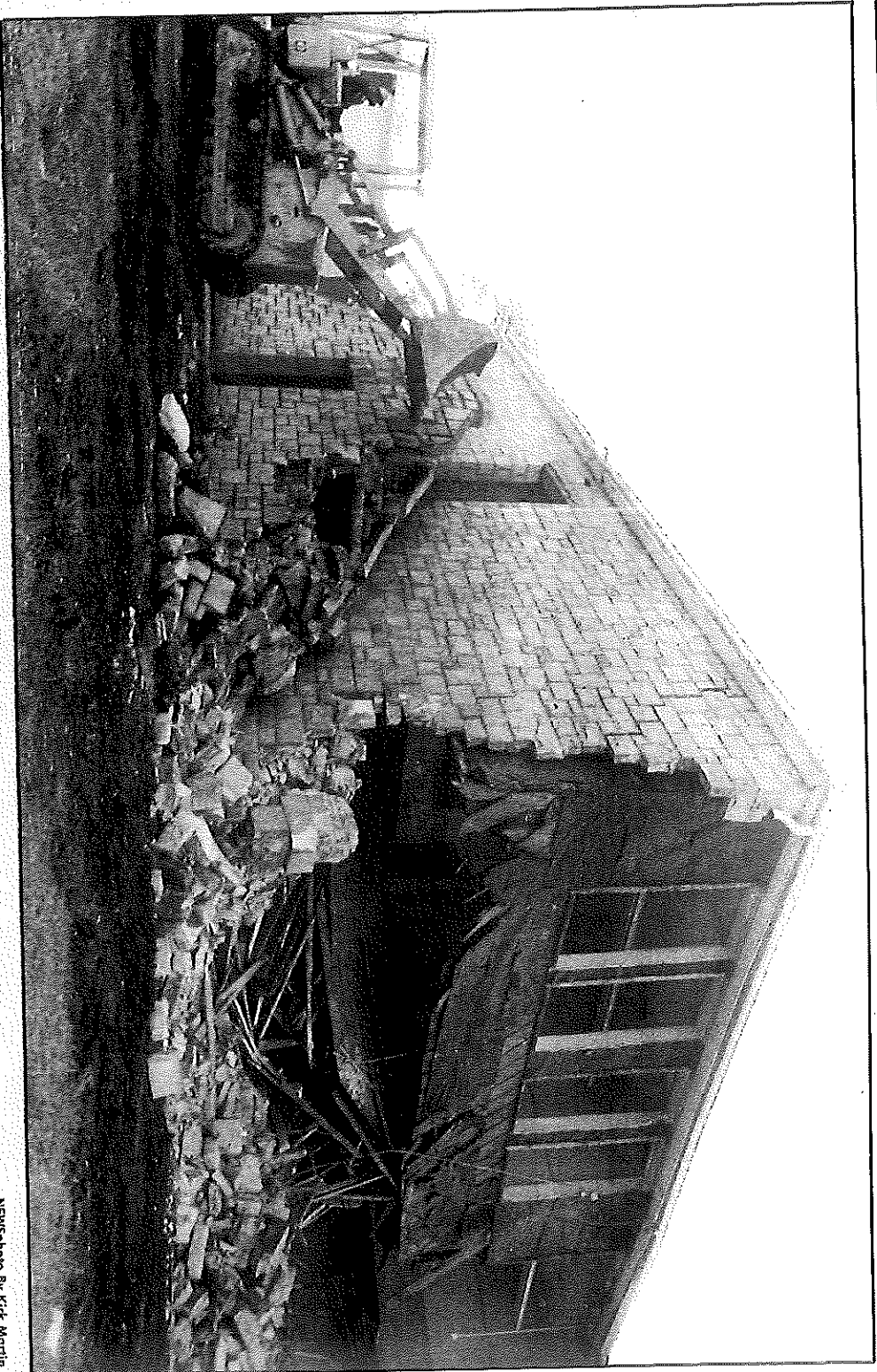
# Flashback



## A 7th Grade At Clarkston School

This photo of a seventh grade class at Clarkston school was found in a house into which the niece of Mrs. Joyce (Holley) Hunton moved. Mrs. Hunton, of Glenwood Rd., graduated from Clarkston High School in 1951 and went to school with many of the students listed on the back of the photo but she does not know what year the photo was made or

how many, if any, of the students listed are still living in this area. If you have an interesting old photo of a DeKalb scene, share it with our readers. Send it to Flashback, DeKalb News/Sun, 739 DeKalb Indl. Way, Decatur, Ga. 30033. We will return it to you.



NEWSphoto By Kirk Martin

## ***Coming Down, But Not Easily***

Heavy equipment attacked the old Clarkston School earlier this week, but the 1930s granite structure was not easy to bring down. Parts of the upper story resisted even after much of its

support had been removed. The old school is being demolished to make way for a new DeKalb County Public Library branch in Clarkston.