

# Lincoln

Name: Lincoln High School	Enrollment: 978
Address: 4400 Interlake Avenue N	Nickname: Lynx
Configuration: 9-12	Colors: Crimson and black
Newspaper: <i>The Lincoln Totem</i>	Annual: <i>The Totem</i>



Lincoln, 1911 MOHAI 83.10.6655.1

Early in 1906, a group of Seattle School Board members crossed Lake Union and headed north to the small neighborhood of Wallingford in search of a site for a new high school in the north end of the city. Seattle's first high school building had exceeded its capacity after only four years (see *Broadway*), and a second school was clearly needed.

Residents of both Fremont and Green Lake wanted the school in their neighborhoods, but a site on Interlake Avenue was chosen for its central location and proximity to streetcar lines. At the time of its selection, the site was covered with brush and stumps left by logging operations and sawmills operating nearby. Some citizens requested the school be named Interlake High School to conform with the new grade school, but the board agreed wholeheartedly on Lincoln, honoring Abraham Lincoln, the nation's 16th president.

Construction began immediately on a 30-room, 98,140-square-foot brick building with Jacobean architectural styling. In addition to classrooms, the building housed a study hall and a gymnasium used alternately by boys and girls. Lincoln High School opened in September 1907 with 900 students from the fast-growing University, Latona, Ravenna, Green Lake, Fremont, and Queen Anne neighborhoods. By its second year, Lincoln's enrollment had nearly doubled, and every available space had been turned into classrooms. Five rooms in nearby Interlake School were also used by high school students until Lincoln's enrollment dropped to 613 students when Queen Anne High School opened in 1909.

## Details:

Name: **Lincoln High School**  
Location: 4400 Interlake Avenue N  
Building: 30-room concrete and masonry  
Architect: James Stephen  
Site: 3.51 acres

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1907:	Opened in September
1914:	Addition (Edgar Blair)
1920:	Wooden annex opened on site
1930:	Addition (Floyd A. Naramore)
1957:	Site expanded to 6.72 acres
1959:	Addition (Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johanson)
1969:	Renovation (Cuykendall, Iles & Associates)
1981:	Closed in June
1981-97:	Portions of building leased
1997-99:	Interim site for Ballard
1999:	Interim site for Latona
2000:	Interim site for Bryant
2004:	Renovation (Integrus Architecture; BEX II)
2004-06:	Interim site for Roosevelt
2006-08:	Interim site for Garfield
2008-15:	Home to various programs, including APP
2009:	Seismic updates
2015:	Designated a City of Seattle landmark
2016-19:	Phase 1 of renovation (Bassetti; BEX IV & BTA IV)
2019:	Lincoln High School reopened as a neighborhood high school
2021:	Phase 2 of renovation; Seismic updates (Bassetti; BEX V)

Activities and school spirit got off to a slow start since the student body was composed of freshmen or transfers from Broadway High School. Gradually over the first few years, however, clubs and activities developed and grew to become part of a long-lasting Lincoln tradition. A Girls' Club formed in 1909 and set about organizing social activities. A Boys' Club, responsible for traffic and safety patrols as well as awarding athletic letters, started in 1911. The Lincoln Cadets Corps also began as a reserve group trained on campus in case of a state or national emergency.

In the second semester of 1907-08, students at Lincoln decided to begin publishing their own school paper. They collected funds among the classes and started a monthly called the Totem. The name carried over to the school's annual at the end of the year. The paper was popular and became a weekly in October 1918. Around this time, the school colors of crimson and black were chosen.

In 1911, a fire damaged the north end of the building. Repairs were minimal, involving new windows and brick-and-mortar work. A new steam heating and ventilating system was also constructed, along with a new one-story boiler room addition at the rear of the building.

By 1913, the number of students had again increased to the point that additional space was needed. The district superintendent reported that over 1,068 students attended Lincoln and 200 more were expected to enter at mid-year. Several portable buildings were used until a major construction project was completed in 1914. The original 1907 central wing was remodeled into 14 classrooms, two locker rooms, a book room, and stock room. A 42,216-square-foot north wing addition was constructed, containing an auditorium, library, and boys' and girls' gymnasiums. The central bay of the 1907 building was also remodeled. The first-floor assembly room and third-floor gymnasium were demolished and replaced with three floors of classrooms. The expanded building proved adequate for only a few years. In 1920, a 10-room temporary wooden annex was built on the southeast corner of the grounds to accommodate growth in enrollment. The school capacity was augmented by 14 portables on the site until Roosevelt was completed.

When Roosevelt High School opened in 1922, Lincoln's attendance area was cut in half. Enrollment remained at a reasonable size for a few years. Then, as the north end of Seattle continued to grow, the old annex and portables came into use again. Finally, in February 1931, the construction of a 36,965-square-foot south wing addition was completed, containing 22 classrooms and a study hall designed to accommodate 250 additional students. The addition was constructed at the same time the rest of the building was modernized. The remodeled school could serve 2,600 students. Dedication ceremonies took place on February 12, Lincoln's birthday. At this time, the temporary annex was no longer needed.



Lincoln, 1914 SPSA 015-2689

Several new clubs and student organizations appeared during the 1920s, including the Honor Society (formed in 1921) and the Triple L (originally Loyal Lincoln Ladies and later changed to Loyal Lincoln Lynx), which performed services for the school. The Lynx Club promoted school spirit and the boys' and girls' Big L clubs encouraged athletics. The music department grew under the directorship of Carl Pitzer, who served from 1924 to 1956. Students participated in a talent show called *Lincolnial* as well as Tradition Day, held annually on Lincoln's birthday. At some point, the nickname "The Little Red Schoolhouse" came into use in reference to the school's origins.

During the Depression years, a favorite hangout was the Lincoln Sweets, aka the "beanery," located at 1508 N 44th Street, where students gathered during lunch periods and after school. Hot dogs and hamburgers cost five cents each. Lucky students who worked there received free meals and treats.

Like all high schools, Lincoln boasted several athletic highlights. The 1908 football team won the Northwest Championship, and the girls' basketball team followed with a trophy in 1909. In the 1913 football season, the Lynx scored 112 points while holding their opponents to only 21, then were narrowly defeated by Everett for the state championship. The year 1919 was memorable because the crimson and black teams were first in the city in football, baseball, and tennis. Coach William Nollan, a Lincoln graduate and former tennis star, began his tenure in 1930. Under his leadership, the Lynx won more than a dozen titles in basketball, track, and football.

Several changes took place during the 1940s, as many Lincoln graduates left to join the armed forces. An evening school was held in the building beginning in 1942. That same year, all students of Japanese ancestry were incarcerated, leaving Lincoln without its Lynx Club president, the head of the Triple L, and editor of the *Totem*.

During the postwar era, students from the growing Shoreline suburb attended Lincoln because that district still had no high school. A school-wide governing body known as the Student Council was formed in 1945. One of Lincoln's teachers, Jessie Orrell, became the first fulltime counselor in the Seattle School District and served the school for a total of 40 years. In 1949, tuberculosis patients at Firland Sanatorium received their diplomas through Lincoln, having been instructed by teachers sent to the hospital.

The 1950s witnessed continued growth and vitality at Lincoln. In 1959-60, enrollment reached 2,800, making Lincoln Seattle's largest high school. Formerly a teacher and coach, Homer M. Davis was named principal in 1954. He was much respected and remained head of the school until 1969. Athletics flourished, with the Lynx



Lincoln, 1960 SPSA 015-535

winning city championships in both basketball and baseball. A huge rock located near the corner of the school by the south doors became a popular target for students. Before crucial games, the rock would be painted by the rival school. This rock was buried in the 1960s at the request of the principal after it became a platform for obscenities.

Two large building additions on the east side of the building were completed in 1959. The first building was 29,336 square feet and included a new gymnasium with seating capacity for 2,040 people. Clerestory sawtooth-shaped skylights ran the length of the building. The locker room and office space for coaches were located in the basement. The second addition was a two-story 31,410-square-foot building located at the southeast corner of the property. It included an 1,100-seat auditorium, a band/orchestra room, choral room, audio/visual classrooms, woodworking, and gas engine/electric shops. A breezeway connected the two additions.

Ten years later, in 1969, major remodeling took place in parts of the aging structure. The north wing study hall was combined with the library to form a new learning resource center dedicated to Homer M. Davis. A new card catalog was installed two years later.

In 1971, Lincoln became a four-year high school with an enrollment of 1,750. Since nearby Interlake School, located at 45th and Wallingford, had closed, the high school used several rooms in the former elementary school for language arts classes, social studies classes, and special education program. That same year Lincoln was integrated with the addition of about 50 Black students. Roberta Barr became the principal at Lincoln in 1973. Barr was a Black educator, civil rights leader, actor, librarian, and television personality, and the district's first woman high school principal. During 1974, 350 more minority students were assigned to the school as a part of the district's desegregation program. A few years later there was an influx of students from Southeast Asia, and a Newcomer Center opened to assist them in adjusting to the school system.

A 1979 Seattle School District plan for future building use indicated Lincoln would be on the short list for closure because of the building's age, the small size of the site, and its declining enrollment. The final announcement came in February 1981, just prior to what became the school's last Tradition Day celebration. During that final year at Lincoln, students and faculty maintained their pride and school spirit. Principal Barr noted how the multi-racial student body had emerged united. Other recent successes were the award-winning newspaper, rated All-American by the National Scholastic Press Association for seven semesters in a row, a popular arts magnet program, and



the excellent special education program. Queen Anne High School closed at the same time. Students from Lincoln were reassigned to Garfield.

Following its closure, the 80-year-old building was leased to community groups and used by a number of community and religious organizations, including the Wallingford Boys and Girls Club and the Calvary Church.

In 1993, the district announced plans for a capital improvement program that would provide funds to renovate the structure. At that time, Lincoln was slated to be the future home of Hamilton Middle School, with a section set aside for community services. Before that could happen, however, Ballard High School needed a temporary home during construction of its new building, when Wilson could not be made ready in time to house Ballard students.

In September 1997, Ballard students moved to Lincoln as their interim site, while Lincoln was still being renovated. The building served as a high school until September 1999, when Ballard students returned to their new school and Lincoln became the interim site for Latona for a year. Bryant students used the building until September 2001. In 2004, the school was remodeled in preparation for the school to be used as an interim site for high schools. Both Roosevelt (2004-06) and Garfield (2006-08) were temporarily located at Lincoln.

After 2008, the Lincoln building continued to serve as an interim site for various programs and schools, including Evening School and the APP program that had previously been at Lowell. The APP program, which was the highly capable program for the north and northwest region of Seattle moved from Lincoln to Cascadia when it opened in 2017. It was necessary for these programs to relocate by 2017, when the district approved plans to modernize and renovate Lincoln and reopen it as a comprehensive high school. During this time, Solid Ground and Seattle Public Library leased the northeast corner of the parking lot. The lease was still active in 2022.

Rebuilding Lincoln into an operational campus was a challenge. The many interior remodels during the interim years had left the building disjointed and, according to one district report, “without a central heart.” In November 2015 Lincoln was designated a historic landmark by the City of Seattle, with its site, west building exteriors, and multiple interior features of the building to be preserved. That same year Bassetti Architects was hired to design the new school. The designers drew on input from a School Design Advisory Team comprised



Lincoln, 2019 ©Benjamin Benschneider SPSA 015-2943

of teachers and staff from high schools around the district, seven members of the local community, two Lincoln alumni, and other stakeholders. Bassetti had previously renovated Franklin and other historic schools.

The first construction phase began in 2017 and was completed in 2019. The new Lincoln includes 257,200 square feet, enough space to accommodate up to 1,600 students in grades 9-12. There are 48 classrooms, four career and technical education labs, 10 science labs, a special education suite with occupational and physical therapy rooms, two multi-purpose spaces, a library, commons/cafeteria, gymnasium, and theater. The project involved preserving many historic interior elements, including stairways and the Batchelder tile drinking fountain that was installed by the graduating class of 1930. Lincoln High School was awarded the 2020 Beth Chave Best Rehabilitation Award, recognizing outstanding achievement in the field of historic preservation. The project was also awarded the Learning by Design Grand Prize in the Renovation, Adaptive Reuse and Restoration category in 2020. Learning by Design is an organization that acknowledges education design innovation and excellence nationwide.

Minimal upgrades were made to the east side, 1959 gymnasium, and auditorium buildings. Those areas were addressed in phase 2 of the project, that began in summer 2021.

One of Lincoln's lasting monuments is the bronze bust of young Abraham Lincoln, which stands on the east side of the school, outside of the entry to the auditorium. The bust was created by sculptor Avard Fairbanks in 1964, in memory of his sister-in-law, Margaret Fairbanks Garred, the founder of Lincoln's Tradition Day. A painting titled Vancouver's Discovery at Restoration Point, May 1792 by renowned artist Bill Holm, a 1943 Lincoln graduate and art teacher (1953-1968), was returned to the school and re-installed in the new library courtesy of the Lincoln Alumni Class of 1943. It had hung for many years at Seattle School District headquarters. The renovation included the removal of several neoclassical plaster bas reliefs that were part of the original building construction. The bas reliefs were removed at the request of the principal and have been preserved by the district's Records and Archives Department.

The Wallingford community embraced the new Lincoln High School with open arms. A celebratory parade was held in July 2019, students were welcomed back with a ribbon-cutting event on September 3, and classes began



Lincoln, 2019 ©Benjamin Benschneider SPSA 015-2942



Lincoln, 2019 ©Benjamin Benschneider SPSA 015-2944

the following day. *The Seattle Times* reported in October 2019: “Last month, the district opened the long-anticipated Wallingford school to 591 freshmen and sophomores after nearly 40 years of closure, re-establishing Lincoln as Seattle’s oldest operating high school. But in more ways than not, the Lincoln that opened its doors this fall is a different school, a product of its time, renovated for close to \$100 million and expanded to the size of roughly five Costcos to eventually accommodate 1,600 students from parts of the Queen Anne, University District, Fremont, Wallingford, and Green Lake neighborhoods. Today’s Lincoln is a technological testing ground for Seattle Public Schools, which gave each student a laptop and purchased several 3D printers. There is an entire room outfitted with exercise bikes, a ‘genius’ bar for charging devices and a futuristic courtyard.”

The students who entered as sophomores in 2019 were part of the June 2022 graduation class—the first graduating class from Lincoln in 41 years.