

Whittier

Name: Whittier Elementary School	Enrollment: 417
Address: 1320 NW 75th Street	Nickname: Wildcats
Configuration: K-5	Colors: Blue and gold



Whittier, 2000 ©Mary Randlett SPSA 282-7

Parents in northeast Ballard complained that their children had to walk all the way to Salmon Bay School. In response, Ballard School District No. 50 opened the North End School in 1905 in the former Hubbard house, a single-story structure on the southeast corner of what is now 13th Avenue NW and 75th Street (formerly Railroad and Schooner Street) that was remodeled into two classrooms.

Students took turns being the “bell boy” who stood outside, ringing a handbell to summon children to school. At recess, children entertained themselves by balancing on a small, plank bridge that spanned the deep creek running down Railroad Avenue (now 13th) next to the school. They also played among grazing cows in an apple orchard to the northwest. Many students kept gardens on the school grounds.

In 1906, North End School had four teachers and 136 pupils in grades K-6. A second building was erected to provide another classroom. A portable was added to ease crowding after the school was annexed into Seattle Public Schools in June 1907, and two portables were immediately built to accommodate enrollment growth. When the school year ended in 1908, the temporary buildings were removed, and the original structure was moved to the other side of 13th Avenue NW, where it was remodeled into a private residence. It was torn down in 1956.

Construction of a permanent functional-style building to replace the North End School was well underway by April 1908 on property to the northwest. The name of the school was changed to honor John Greenleaf



Whittier, ca. 1908 MOHAI 3122

Details:

Name: **Whittier School**

Location: 7501 13th Avenue NW

Building: 12-room, 2-story brick

Architect: Newton Gaunt

Site: 1.79 acres

1908: Named in spring; opened before September

1921: Grounds expanded to 2.66 acres

1997: Closed in June for construction; Students relocated to Monroe as an Interim site

1998: Demolished

Whittier, a nineteenth century poet, author, and abolitionist. The initial student body of Whittier School was comprised of students from the North End School and 40 students who transferred from Salmon Bay School.

The new school was designed by Newton Gauntt, who was not a member of the district's architectural staff. Consequently, its exterior did not resemble any of the other buildings within the district at that time, although it did bear a faint resemblance to Whitworth (1908) and Fairview (1908).

Students from Crown Hill living north of 85th Street, and therefore outside of the city limits, could pay tuition and attend Whittier, rather than walk to Oak Lake School. Eventually a square mile was added to the Whittier service area to ease the financial burden on parents from that neighborhood.

Fall 1913 brought difficulties at the school as enrollment suddenly jumped by 100 students. Many pupils came from families newly arrived from Scandinavia and spoke little English. These children were encouraged to read as much as possible.



Whittier, ca. 1940 SPSA 282-4

Details:

Name: **Whittier School**
Building: 12-room, 2-story brick
Architect: Floyd A. Naramore
Site: 1.79 acres

1928: Second building opened
1997: Closed in June for construction;
Students relocated to
Monroe as an interim site
1998: Demolished



Whittier, 1960 SPSA 282-3

Details:

Name: **Whittier Elementary School**
Location: 1320 NW 75th Street
Building: 2-story
Architect: DLR/John Graham & Associates
Site: 2.66 acres

1999: New school opened in
September (BEX I)

An industrial center was established at Whittier in fall 1916 in response to a petition made two years earlier. An industrial center provided manual training and home economics. Overcrowding at Whittier was alleviated in spring 1919 when Crown Hill School opened as an annex, leaving 580 students at the main school in 1920. In 1921, the old apple orchard was incorporated as an upper playfield.

By 1927, the grounds were dotted with nine portables needed to house 728 students. Class sizes were finally reduced in 1928 with the opening of a second brick building designed by Floyd A. Naramore. This two-story brick structure in a 20th Century Gothic design was situated on the east side of the 1908 building. The building was the only building in the district to feature Gothic detailing, executed in cast stone. Its layout facilitated the district's platoon system by having specialized rooms for music, physical education, industrial arts, and geography-science.

With the introduction of junior high schools in the district, 280 children were transferred out in February 1931, and the school returned to a K-6 configuration. Enrollment peaked at 1,045 in 1954-55.

During the 1960s, Whittier's enrollment stabilized between 800 and 900 students. Domeneca Del Duca retired in the early 1960s after over 31 years of teaching music at Whittier. "Del Duca would issue each student a recorder flute. Inscribed on it would be the student's name. 'She took the time to etch each recorder herself.'"

Beginning in September 1981, as part of the district's desegregation plan, Whittier was grouped with Gatzert and Day in a triad. First and 2nd graders were bused to Gatzert, while kindergarten students attended all three schools and grades 3-5 attended Day and Whittier. Due to this arrangement, Whittier's enrollment sank to less than 200 students. In September 1989, the school became a K-5 school and the Horizon Program designed for advanced learners was added. This program was later known as Spectrum. Enrollment numbers increased.

After passage of a bond issue in 1994, Whittier received a high priority listing for replacement. Although the 1928 building had some unique architectural features, the Landmarks Preservation Board voted against awarding it landmark status, thereby clearing the path for demolition. In May 1997, an all-class reunion was held to say farewell to the old buildings. Before current students were relocated to Monroe as an interim site, they collected items from the school for a time capsule to be buried prior to the new building's completion.

The new Whittier building, completed in 1999, incorporated a stained-glass window and keystone from the 1928 building. The building reflects Ballard's history through a maritime theme with wave-like designs on the brick exterior as well as the interior artwork. Ceramic tiles depicting sea creatures line a garden retaining wall leading to the main entrance. Whittier students made the tiles with artist Charles Bigger in 1998-99. The play equipment, which has since been replaced, still features a sea serpent.

Students at Whittier have shown exceptional achievement to the present day. In 2018, Whittier placed in the top 20 percent of all schools in Washington for overall test scores.