

History of the Central Area

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The Central Area Defined

Unlike some Seattle neighborhoods, the Central Area has never existed as a political entity separate from the City of Seattle. In addition the Central Area's development was not part of a unified real state scheme with coordinated public improvements (such as the Mount Baker community). For these reasons, it has never had official boundaries and various writers describe its extent in various ways.

Almost all attempts to describe the neighborhood include a core area bounded by Madison Street on the north, Jackson Street on the south, 15th Avenue on the west, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Way (formerly Empire Way) on the east.

In 1975, Nyberg and Steinbrueck identified the eastern boundary of the Central Area as 30th Avenue (more or less), and also included extensions to the north and south of the core area. The extension to the south of Jackson Street was bounded by 30th Avenue (approximately) on the east, Interstate 90 on the south, and the mid-block alley just east of Rainier Avenue South on the west. The extension to the north of Madison Street was bounded on the west by 23rd Avenue, on the east by the Washington Park Arboretum, and extended north to a line just north of East Helen Street marking the boundary between the plats known as the Madison Park Addition and the Hazelwood Addition Supplemental.¹

Walt Crowley describes the neighborhood as a “sprawling residential district . . . roughly bounded by Twelfth and Rainier Avenues on the west, Thirtieth Avenue on the east, Madison on the north, and I-90 on the south.”² Crowley goes on to state that the Central Area “lacks a single business or cultural center but is organized around several crisscrossing major arterials, including Madison, Cherry, and Union Streets, Twenty-third East, and Martin Luther King Jr. Way.”³

According to Mary T. Henry, the Central Area lies midway between the Central Business District and Lake Washington. She goes on to state that the neighborhood is “sometimes known as the Central District, or affectionately by African Americans as the CD or the Colored District” and describes it as “bounded by East Madison on the north, Jackson Street on the south, 12th Avenue on the west and Martin Luther King, Jr. Way on the east.”⁴

¹ Folke Nyberg and Victor Steinbrueck, “History,” *Central Area: An Inventory of Buildings and Urban Design Resources* (Seattle: Historic Seattle Preservation and Development Authority, 1975).

² Walt Crowley, *National Trust Guide: Seattle* (New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 1998), p. 141.

³ Crowley, p. 141.

⁴ Mary T. Henry, “Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History,” *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History* (Essay 3079, March 10, 2001, accessed February 22, 2009).

In recent years the City of Seattle has, for statistical purposes, used a definition of the neighborhood based on census tract boundaries (specifically, Tracts .77, 79, 87 and 88, together comprising the “Central Area / Squire Park Community Reporting Area”). According to this method, the Central Area is bounded on the west by 15th Avenue, on the east by 31st Avenue, on the south by Yesler Way and on the north by Denny Way west of 23rd Avenue and E. Roy Street to the east of 23rd Avenue. To more closely approximate the neighborhood as defined by Nyberg and Steinbrueck, and by Crowley, Tract 90, known as the “Judkins Park Community Reporting Area,” and Tract 89, consisting of the southern component of the the “Madrona / Leschi Community Reporting Area,” can be included.

All of these definitions of the neighborhood place the bulk of the Central Area in Sections 28 and 33 of Township 25 North, Range 4 East, and Section 4 of Township 24 North, Range 4 East.

Preliminaries

The members of the Denny Party were not the earliest non-native Americans to settle in the 83.87 square miles of land area now included within the City of Seattle. However, the land claims of William N. Bell (1817-1887), Arthur A. Denny (1822 – 1899), and Carson D. Boren (1824 – 1912), three members of that group, formed the core of the town at its original incorporation in 1865. David S. Maynard (1808-1873) and Henry Yesler also had claims along Seattle’s original waterfront. Boren and Yesler were the initial European American settlers to take possession of land in what is now Seattle’s Central Area.

Initial Land Claims

Although initially quartered at Alki Point, Bell, Denny and Boren soon became aware of its limitations as a prospective townsite and began to look around central Puget Sound for more suitable places to locate their Donation Land Claims. In early February 1852, the three men took soundings along the eastern shore of Elliott Bay. On February 15, 1852, they staked the north and south boundaries of the area they planned to divide into their three claims along the east side of Elliott Bay.⁵ The northernmost claim was that of William Bell. Arthur A. Denny took the claim in the center, and Carson D. Boren took the southernmost parcel.

On March 31, 1852, David Maynard arrived from Olympia looking for a site to salt and barrel Duwamish River salmon. Maynard decided to join Bell, Denny and Boren on Elliott Bay and established his fishery on the future site of Pioneer Square.⁶

In order to allow Maynard to establish a claim with access to deep water, Bell, Denny and Boren agreed to adjust the boundaries of their claims in order to allow the southern boundary of Boren’s claim to be moved north from what is now the intersection of King Street and First Avenue South to what is now the south margin of Yesler Way.⁷

It appears the adjustment was accomplished by moving Boren’s claim directly north rather than northwest to follow the shoreline. This adjustment reduced the width of Denny’s upland holdings but left Denny with his entire original waterfront, resulting in a small, triangular flange owned by Denny separating Boren’s claim from most of the frontage. After the adjustment to accommodate Maynard, Boren’s waterfront extended

⁵ Greg Lange, “Seattle’s Early Donation Land Claims” *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History*, (Essay 7045, September 26, 2004, accessed February 2009). Lang cites National Archives, Washington Donation Land Claims, National Archives microfilm M615. (Washington D.C.: National Archives, National Archives and Records Service, 1970).

⁶ Greg Lange, “Seattle’s Early Donation Land Claims”

⁷ Arthur Armstrong Denny, *Pioneer Days on Puget Sound* (Fairfield, Washington: Ye Galleon Press, 1998), pp. 39-40.

approximately from Yesler Way to a half block north of Columbia (the waterfront was just west of what is now First Avenue at the time). Boren's waterfront was later reduced even further in order to accommodate Henry Yesler.

William Bell stated in the papers he filed for the Donation Land Claim with the U.S. General Land Office that he settled on his claim on April 3, 1852. The William and Sarah Bell cabin was located near the future intersection of Elliott Avenue and Battery Street in Belltown.⁸

David Maynard stated in the papers he filed for the Donation Land Claim with the U.S. General Land Office that he settled on his claim April 3, 1852. His cabin was located at the future northwest corner of 1st Avenue S and Main Street.⁹

Boren's family moved to the east side of the bay on April 3 with Bell and Maynard; however, Boren had left the area several days earlier to bring north the Denny Party's livestock.¹⁰ Carson Boren stated in the papers he filed for the Donation Land Claim with the U.S. General Land Office that he settled on his claim May 13, 1852. The cabin of Carson and Mary Boren was located at the future northwest corner of 2nd Avenue and Cherry Street.¹¹

A portion of Boren's claim extended into what has become the Central Area. East of Broadway, Boren's claim was bounded on the north by what is now Cherry Street, on the south by Fir Street, and extended east to what is now the eastern margin of 20th Avenue.¹²

Arthur Denny stated in the papers he filed for the Donation Land Claim with the U.S. General Land Office that he settled on his claim June 12, 1852. Arthur and Mary (Boren) Denny's first cabin in Seattle was located near the future intersection of Elliott Avenue and Bell Street.¹³

East of Broadway, Denny's claim included the land now bounded on the south by Cherry Street and on the north by Union Street. The east line of Denny's Donation Claim ran parallel to and slightly west of 12th Avenue, and thus did not extend into the core of the Central Area, which is bounded on the west by 15th Avenue.

⁸ Greg Lange, "Seattle's Early Donation Land Claims."

⁹ Greg Lange, "Seattle's Early Donation Land Claims."

¹⁰ Greg Lange, "Seattle and King County's First White Settlers," *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History* (Essay 1660, October 15, 2000). Bagley (p, 22) suggests Boren was absent in April but provides no explanation.

¹¹ Greg Lange, "Seattle's Early Donation Land Claims."

¹² For precise location of Donation Land Claim boundaries, see Kroll Maps.

¹³ Greg Lange, "Seattle's Early Donation Land Claims."

Development of the Claims

Boren's Claim

Unlike Denny, Carson Boren was not particularly interested in building a settlement. He began selling off parts of his land very soon after he, Denny, and Bell staked their original claims. "He had the most valuable property, as it turned out, but neither sought nor got much advantage from that fact."¹⁴ According to Roberta Watt, Boren was a conscientious worker, but unhappiness in his home life robbed him of the ambition that actuated the others and "sent him to the woods and away from the habitations of men."¹⁵

On April 18, 1855, Boren sold the front half of his claim to Charles C. Terry and Edward Lander.¹⁶ It appears that Terry may have eventually acquired the eastern half of Boren's claim as well.¹⁷

Yesler's Claim

Henry Yesler (1810 – 1892) arrived on the east shore of Elliott Bay from Portland in October 1852, looking for a place to build a steam sawmill. According to Arthur A. Denny, Boren and Maynard each agreed to give Yesler a portion of their respective claims in order to provide Yesler with access to the waterfront and thereby encourage him to build his mill in Seattle. Adjusting the boundaries was easy because the claims had not yet been filed at the General Land Office, which was in Oregon City at the time.¹⁸

Henry Yesler's Donation Land Claim consisted of two parts. The first of these, a long narrow panhandle (consisting of the land made available to him by Boren and Maynard), stretched from Elliott Bay along what is now Yesler Way to a large rectangular piece of land in what is now the heart of the Central Area.¹⁹ The panhandle extended only a block north (to Fir Street) and a half block south of Yesler Way between the bay and the east margin of 20th Avenue. At the east end of this panhandle, a large, nearly square tract stretched from the east margin of 20th Avenue to 30th Avenue and from a half block north of Marion to a half block south of Yesler Way.²⁰

¹⁴ Roger Sale, *Seattle, Past to Present* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1982), p.11.

¹⁵ Sale, p.11.

¹⁶ Arthur Armstrong Denny, *Pioneer Days on Puget Sound* (Fairfield, Washington: Ye Galleon Press, 1998), p. 42.

¹⁷ Clarence B. Bagley, *History of Seattle* (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1916), p. 563.

¹⁸ Arthur Armstrong Denny, p. 41.

¹⁹ Murray Morgan, in his book *Skid Road: An Informal Portrait of Seattle* (New York: The Viking Press, 1951, p. 29), incorrectly locates the upland portion of Yesler's claim on Capitol Hill.

²⁰ For precise location of Donation Land Claim boundaries, see Kroll Maps.

Today, the Garfield High School campus and the Garfield Playfield are located somewhat west of the center of this second component of the Yesler claim, and this component has become the core of what is now the Central Area.

Yesler began operating his sawmill in 1853 near the corner of Mill St. and Front Street (now Yesler Way and First Avenue).²¹ Yesler's mill became the most important building in town, and the biggest employer.²² The cookhouse became the town's only restaurant; the hall became Seattle's meeting place.²³

Logs intended for Yesler's Mill were skidded to the bay then rafted to a boom just north of the mill. From there, they were hauled by a steam winch up an incline to the saw. The logs were headspiked onto a carriage and 'dogged down' with screw-tightened clamps. The carriage was pulled forward, and after the circular saw had sliced off a plank, the carriage reversed, the plank was carried away, the clamps released, and the log reset. This process was repeated again and again. It was hard, deafening, and dangerous work. During times of peak demand, the mill ran 24 hours a day, cutting 10,000 board feet of lumber.²⁴

By some accounts, Yesler sold his sawmill in 1876, and dedicated the remaining 16 years of his life to the real estate business, where he knew the real money was.²⁵ Although Roger Sale believes there to be "no evidence that he ever saw Seattle as much more than a place that had rich and exploitable natural resources,"²⁶ Yesler did partner with Arthur Denny in the operation of a store from 1860 to 1866.²⁷

Seattle Made County Seat and Washington Territory Established

On January 6, 1853, Seattle was made the seat of King County by the Legislature of the Oregon Territory.²⁸ The Territory of Washington was created about two months later on March 2, 1853.

²¹ Calvin F. Schmid, *Social Trends in Seattle* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1944), p. 11.

²² Schmid, p. 43.

²³ Sale, p. 12.

²⁴ David Buerge, *Seattle in the 1880s* (Seattle: The Historical Society of Seattle and King County, 1986). Buerge, p. 35. Buerge cites Clarence B. Bagley, *History of Seattle* (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1916), p. 223.

²⁵ Sale, p. 12.

²⁶ Sale, p. 12.

²⁷ Sale, p. 19.

²⁸ Schmid, p. 7.

First Plats of Seattle

On May 23, 1853, “the first plat of Seattle was filed for record by C. D. Boren and A. A. Denny, and subsequently, on the same day, the plat of another portion was filed by D. S. Maynard.”²⁹ Denny and Boren platted land north of Mill Street (Yesler Way), Maynard platted the land to the south.³⁰ Neither of these initial plats extended into the present day Central Area.

The Donation Land Claims of William Bell, A. A. Denny, Carson D. Boren, David Maynard, and a portion of Henry Yesler’s claim were all included in the Town of Seattle when it was initially incorporated in 1865.

Transfer of Indian Lands

In one sense, the early claim filing, platting, and city-building activities of Bell, Denny, Boren, Maynard and Yesler were premature. The settlers who filed their donation land claims prior to January 22, 1855 were essentially establishing claims on lands that had not yet been transferred to the Federal Government by the native peoples. Although no one was under the illusion that the Indians would be able to maintain their sovereignty, the actual transfer of property rights in the Seattle area had to await conclusion of the Point Elliott Treaty in 1855.

On January 22 of that year, leaders of several Puget Sound tribes, including Chief Seattle, signed a treaty with Territorial Governor Isaac Stevens (1818-1862) at Point Elliott (now Mukilteo). The tribes, including the Duwamish, surrendered their lands for cash, relocation to reservations, and access to traditional fishing and hunting grounds.³¹

When the treaty was concluded, there were 9,712 Native Americans living west of the Cascade Range and only a few hundred white settlers on Puget Sound. “Doc” Maynard played a major role in securing tribal concessions.³²

²⁹ Arthur Armstrong Denny, p. 85.

³⁰ Sale, p. 20.

³¹ Walt Crowley, “Native American tribes sign Point Elliott Treaty at Mukilteo on January 22, 1855,” *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History* (Essay 5402, March 13, 2003, accessed March 31, 2008). Crowley cites Clarence Bagley, *History of Seattle* (Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1916); Bagley, *History of King County, Washington* (Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1929); Murray Morgan, *Skid Road: An Informal Portrait of Seattle* (New York: Viking Press, 1951); Edmond Meany, *History of the State of Washington* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1909). For text of treaty see “Treaty of Point Elliott, 1855,” *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History* (Essay 2629, January 1, 2000, accessed March 31, 2008).

³² Walt Crowley, “Native American tribes sign Point Elliott Treaty at Mukilteo on January 22, 1855.”

The agreements did not secure a durable peace, and the Puget Sound area experienced several bloody clashes over the next few years, including an attack on Seattle itself on January 26, 1856.³³

Other Initial Central Area Landowners:

Yesler and Boren were not the only settlers to acquire title to land in the present-day Central Area; however, most of the other initial landowners purchased their property from the government after the land had been surveyed, rather than filing donation land claims.

South of Yesler's claim was a large tract owned by W. C. Hill and J. Vance Lewis. These two men received their land patents in the early 1880s, though ownership of their claim was initially disputed with Maynard who owed property to the west.³⁴

Another tract was acquired by William S. Ladd, a prominent, influential and wealthy citizen of Portland, Oregon. Ladd became a director of the First National Bank of Seattle,³⁵ and Dexter Horton sold his business (Dexter Horton & Co.) to Ladd.³⁶

William H. Patterson's claim consisted of the southern half of the northeast quarter of Section 4, Township 24 North, Range 4 East. This property appears to have been platted as Burke's 2nd Addition, which extends from 24th Avenue to a line a little more than half a block east of 32nd Avenue, and from South Main Street (really an alley) on the north to South Lane Street on the south.

Marshall F. Moore (1829 - 1870) purchased a small claim just south of Yesler's claim consisting of Government Lot 5 in the northeast quarter of Section 4 in Township 24 North, Range 4 East. It appears to have been platted as Kaufman's Addition. Moore, a Republican, was the 7th Governor of Washington Territory, a position he held from 1867 to 1869.³⁷

Some land east of Yesler's claim was acquired by Frank Tarkell (or Tarbell)

Washington State was the initial owner of at least one of the quarter section immediately north of Yesler's claim (northeast quarter of Section 33, Township 25 North, Range 4 East). Washington State may also have been the initial owner of the northwest quarter of Section 33, though a map of initial claims shows T. S. Russell as the owner. (When the land within a particular state was initially surveyed for the federal government and sold, a

³³ Walt Crowley, "Native American tribes sign Point Elliott Treaty at Mukilteo on January 22, 1855."

³⁴ Bagley, v. II, p. 570.

³⁵ Bagley, v. II, p. 480.

³⁶ Bagley, v. I, p. 765.

³⁷ "Marshall F. Moore," *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia* (September 25, 2008, accessed February 7, 2009).

section of each township was often granted to the state for support of the state's university. These properties were often called university reserve properties and are the basis of economic support for so-called land grant universities.) Portions of this land appear to have been acquired by Yesler at a later date.

Other early owners of land north of Yesler's claim included James W. Law,³⁸ Mary Young, Selim E. Woodworth, Henry A. Webster,³⁹ and partners Frank Drew and Abel Pendleton.

James Campbell acquired land west of Yesler's claim and north of Boren's claim.

³⁸ According to Bagley (v. II, p. 673), Law later platted J. W. Law's Addition at the top of Queen Anne Hill, and sold house lots there for \$10.00 each.

³⁹ The *Seattle Daily Chronicle* of March 12, 1882 noted -- on column 1 of page 3 -- that H. A. Webster and his wife had returned from San Francisco and that Mr. Webster's health was poor and that he didn't have much use of his lower limbs. See Marjorie Rhodes, *Biography Notes on Pioneers of Puget Sound* (Seattle: Marjorie Rhodes, 1992), p.189.

Territorial Period 1853 – 1889

The Boundaries of Seattle and Population in the Territorial Period

Seattle's Territorial Period began when the Territory of Washington was created March 2, 1853 and lasted until the State of Washington entered the Union on November 11, 1889. Although there was little settlement in the Central Area during this 36-year period, the stage was being set for rapid development in the 1890s and early 1900s.

Seattle had not yet been incorporated as a town when the 1860 Census was conducted; however, the population of the settlement at that time was estimated to be about 150.⁴⁰ It is not clear if any non-Native people were living in the area now known as the Central Area when the census was made.

Washington's Territorial Legislature incorporated the Town of Seattle for the first time on January 14, 1865, adopting a city charter that put the municipal government in the hands of a board of five trustees, to be elected annually. The town encompassed an area stretching from Howell Street on the north to Atlantic Street on the South, and from Elliott Bay on the west to 24th Avenue on the east.⁴¹ The town thus included the western half of what is now the Central Area from the date of its earliest incorporation.

The trustees met for the first time on January 28, 1865. Charles C. Terry (1829-1867) was elected president of the board. Other members were Henry L. Yesler, Hiram Burnett, David T. Denny (1832-1903), and Charles Plummer (d. 1866).

Over the next two years, the trustees adopted a total of 14 ordinances, beginning with one that implemented a municipal tax (possibly a source of

⁴⁰ James R. Warren and William R. McCoy, *Highlights of Seattle's History: Illustrated* (Seattle: Historical Society of Seattle and King County, 1982.), p. 46. According to Bagley, Seattle's population at the time was actually 182. Bagley's figure is cited in Quintard Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle's Central District from 1870 Through the Civil Rights Era* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), p. 249, note 7.

⁴¹ Greg Lange and Cassandra Tate, "Legislature incorporates the Town of Seattle for the first time on January 14, 1865." *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History* (Essay 168, September 8, 2004, accessed July 4, 2009). Lange and Tate cite Washington Territory House of Representatives, *Journal of the House of Representatives of the Territory of Washington. Twelfth Session of the Legislative Assembly, Begun and Held at Olympia ... December 5th, 1864 ...* (Olympia: T. F. McElroy, Printer, 1864), 169; Myra L. Phelps, *Public Works in Seattle A Narrative History The Engineering Department, 1875-1975* (Seattle: Seattle Engineering Department, 1978), 225; Clarence B. Bagley, *History of Seattle From the Earliest Settlement to the Present Time Vol. 2* (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1916).

resentment that led to the eventual dissolution of Seattle's first municipal government) . . . The trustees also passed an ordinance calling for the removal of Indians to points outside the town limits and providing for the punishment of those who might harbor them.⁴²

The Territorial Legislature disincorporated Seattle on January 18, 1867 after most of the town's leading citizens filed a petition for dissolution. However, in 1869, the citizens asked the Legislature for another municipal government, with a mayor and town council instead of a board of trustees. The Legislature reincorporated Seattle on December 2, 1869.⁴³ The new city's territory included that of the previously incorporated town but with additional areas extending east to Lake Washington, north to Lake Union, and about a mile south of the old limits. The new city covered a total of 10.86 square miles between the bay and the lake, and stretched from Galer Street on the north to Hanford Street on the south.⁴⁴ These new boundaries included all of the area of Seattle that would eventually become known as the Central Area.

In 1870, the population of Seattle was 1,107.⁴⁵

In 1871, the legislature changed the north boundary of the city, reducing its area considerably.⁴⁶

In 1875, the boundaries were again altered, and although some territory was added, a greater amount was subtracted, reducing the area of the city to 5.08 square miles.⁴⁷ The city still stretched from Elliott Bay to Lake Washington; however, the northern boundary had been moved south to Howell Street (at the north line of Section 28, Township 25 North, Range 4 East), and the southern boundary had been moved north to Atlantic Street (at approximately the south line of Section 4, Township 24 North, Range 4 East).⁴⁸

By 1880, the population of Seattle had increased to 3,533.⁴⁹

In 1883, the boundaries were moved to take in the area lost by the two reductions and about two additional square miles.⁵⁰ The northern boundary of Seattle was moved back to Galer Street east of 15th Avenue (extending even further north -- to Lynn Street/McGraw Street -- west of 15th), and the southern boundary was moved back to

⁴² Greg Lange and Cassandra Tate.

⁴³ Greg Lange and Cassandra Tate.

⁴⁴ Schmid, p. 69 and Chart 14, entitled "Territorial Growth Seattle: 1869 to 1942," p. 73.

⁴⁵ Warren, p. 46.

⁴⁶ Schmid, p. 69

⁴⁷ Schmid, p. 69.

⁴⁸ Schmid, Chart 14, entitled "Territorial Growth Seattle: 1869 to 1942," p. 73

⁴⁹ Warren, p. 46.

⁵⁰ Schmid, p. 69, citing William Barthell Russell, *Annexation and Consolidation in the State of Washington* (Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Washington, 1931), pp. 89-110

Hanford east of 16th Avenue South (even further south to the west of 16th Avenue) Thus, “[t]he sections which had been taken from the original city in 1875 were re-annexed in 1883 along with small contiguous parcels to the north and to the south.”⁵¹ The entire present-day Central Area was once again situated within the borders of incorporated Seattle, although the portion north of Howell was temporarily outside the City limits in the period from at least 1875 to 1883.

In 1886, the legislature’s last alteration occurred, increasing the city’s area by less than one-tenth of a square mile;⁵² however, this alteration did not affect the part of the city now known as the Central Area.

Public Schools in the Territorial Period

In 1869, the city’s residents approved a tax to fund the building of a schoolhouse, resulting in the opening of the first Central School, a simple two story frame building with two classrooms on the east side of 3rd Avenue between Madison and Spring, in 1870.⁵³

In September 1872, two additional schools opened in what is now downtown Seattle. Primary students living north of Cherry went to North School at Third and Pine, those living south of Cherry went to South School at 517 Main Street. When it was built, South School stood alone on the edge of a “virgin forest,”⁵⁴ a reminder that little development had occurred east of what is now downtown Seattle.

In 1888, Seattle had five public schools instructing nearly 2,000 students.⁵⁵ These included Central School (1870), North School (1872), and South School (1872). However, the first public schools to be located within the Central Area did not appear until the very end of the Territorial Period.

In 1889, a new South School was built at 12th Avenue South and Weller Street.⁵⁶ It was located at the southwest corner of the intersection on a parcel situated near the east line of David Maynard’s Donation Land Claim and, thus, somewhat west of the present-day Central Area.⁵⁷ The property is now occupied by the Leschi Center.⁵⁸ The new South School was a substantial brick, Romanesque style building, but it only survived 20 years.

⁵¹ Schmid, Chart 14, entitled “Territorial Growth Seattle: 1869 to 1942,” p. 73.

⁵² Schmid, p. 69, citing William Barthell Russell, *Annexation and Consolidation in the State of Washington* (Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Washington, 1931), pp. 89-110).

⁵³ Nile Thompson and Carolyn J. Marr, *Building for Learning: Seattle Public School Histories, 1862-2000*. (Seattle: Seattle Public Schools, 2002), p. x.

⁵⁴ Thompson & Marr, pp. 78, 107.

⁵⁵ Buerge, p. 63.

⁵⁶ Thompson and Marr, p. 108.

⁵⁷ See Baist Map, 1912, and Kroll Maps.

⁵⁸ See Kroll Maps.

The old South School was renamed Main Street School.⁵⁹

The new South School was demolished in 1909. Although some of the students in grades 1 - 5 were assigned to the Main Street School, most transferred to the new Colman School, which opened in January 1910.⁶⁰

The Madison Street School (1888 – 1890), which operated in the Methodist chapel at 23rd Avenue and Madison Street, may have been the earliest Central Area school. It was one of the temporary sites that served the area east of downtown. The Seattle School District rented a room at the chapel in 1888 so younger children of the area wouldn't have to walk all the way to Central II (also called the Sixth Street School) at 6th and Madison. "The first year, classes at Madison Street School started in October with Ida Hughes teaching all of the children. The following year Adeline Pollack joined her and taught the intermediate grades. In 1889-90 there were 111 students in grades 1 through 8. Classroom space was especially scarce that year because a fire had destroyed Central II the previous April."⁶¹

Platting of the Central Area

Platting, or subdivision, of the land in the present-day Central Area began in 1875 and continued until 1912. Although some Central Area properties remain unplatted today, and although three plats were filed in the period from 1995 to 2008, well after the initial platting of the area was completed, the earlier work had almost entirely fixed the pattern of development in the Central Area by the second decade of the 20th century.

Edes & Knight's Addition: the First Central Area Plat

The first plat filed in what is now the Central Area was the Edes & Knight's Addition (Volume 1 of Plats, page 63, filed February 26, 1875). The plat was filed by N. B. Knight and George and Rhoda Edes, and encompassed roughly 40 blocks from 10th Avenue to 20th Avenues between Cherry and Union streets.⁶²

The initial plat was modified more than once in the territorial period, and has been altered several times since.

The first of these modifications was Edes & Knight's Addition Supplementary (Volume 2 of Plats, page 194, filed October 15, 1888 by Rhoda A. Edes and others). This plat appears to replace the original Edes & Knights Addition and only consists of 30 blocks

⁵⁹ Thompson and Marr, p. 108.

⁶⁰ Thompson and Marr, p. 108.

⁶¹ Thompson and Marr, p. 219.

⁶² Mary T. Henry, "Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History," *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History* (Essay 3079, March 10, 2001, accessed February 22, 2009). Bagley (p. 564) gives the date as August 25, 1870.

(some of which have since been replatted). It extends just a few feet north of Marion except in the area to the west of 15th, where it extends further to the north, and includes two partial and apparently replatted blocks adjacent to Madison at the northwest corner.

Portions of blocks 28 and 29 (bounded on the north by Columbia, on the south by Cherry between 18^h and 20th) were replated in Edes & Knight's Addition Supplemental Blocks 28 - 29 (Volume 3 of Plats, page 69, filed March 2, 1889 by John Parkinson).

A portion of block 26 of the supplementary plat (west of 18th between Columbia and Marion) was replated as Edes & Knight's Addition Supplemental Blocks 26 (Volume 3 of Plats, page 69, filed March 2, 1889 by Charles H. Pierce).

Several additional blocks were replatted in the period from 1889 to 1912 including Edes & Knight's Replat Block 24 (Volume 6 of Plats, page 21, filed June 17, 1890 by C. W. Moore); Edes & Knight's Replat Block 28 (Volume 10 of Plats, page 25, filed April 29, 1902, 1890 by Mary B. Piles); and Morler's Replat Block 21 Edes – Knight (Volume 10 of Plats, page 16, filed February 25, 1902 by Alice C. Morler)

Squire Park and the Platting of Boren's Claim in the Central Area

The portion of Boren's claim that extends into the Central Area (i.e. the portion east of 15th Avenue extending to 20th Avenue between Cherry and Fir streets) is included within four separate plats.

Two of the smaller plats were filed in the territorial period. These include Dean's Addition (Volume 1 of Plats, page 206, filed June 1, 1882 by Peter Dean) and Haller's Addition (Volume 2 of Plats, page 27, filed October 9, 1883 by G. Morris Haller and others). These plats are located between Spruce and Fir streets.

The other two plats were established in the first two years after Washington became a state. These include the most substantial of the four plats, known as the Squire Park Addition (Volume 8 of Plats, page 6, filed September 16, 1891 by Watson C. Squire and others).⁶³ A smaller plat, called Flint's Addition (Volume 9 of Plats, page 51, filed June 13, 1900 by Thomas Flint and others), joined Dean's Addition and Haller's Addition between Spruce and Fir streets.

The Platting of Yesler's Claim in the Central Area

Only a small portion of Yesler's Donation Land Claim was platted in the territorial period. The component of Yesler's claim between 15th Avenue and 20th Avenue (i.e., the portion of Yesler's "panhandle" located in the Central Area) was platted as Yesler's 1st Addition (Volume 1 of Plats, page 215, filed October 7, 1882 by H. L. Yesler and others). The panhandle portion extends a half block south and a full block north of Yesler Way

⁶³ Bagley (p. 570) gives the filing date as November 11, 1890 and indicates that the plat was bounded by Cherry Street, Alder Street, 20th Avenue, and 12th Avenue.

from 15th Avenue to 20th Avenue. Yesler's 1st Addition also extends into the component of the claim between 20th Avenue and 30th Avenue, occupying the southwest corner of this component from a half block south of Yesler Way to Alder Street between 20th Avenue and 23rd Avenue. A supplemental plat was filed for this addition called H. L. Yesler's 1st Addition Supl Block 32 (Volume 5 of Plats, page 95, filed May 22 1890 by Jennie D. West).

The only other recorded plat established during the territorial period on Yesler's donation land claim, The Sander – Boman Real Estate Company's First Addition (Volume 3 of Plats, page 114, filed May 7, 1889 by Sander – Boman Real Estate Company) is located immediately north of Yesler's 1st Addition to the west of the Garfield campus. It stretches from Alder Street to an alley north of James Street and is bounded on the west by 22nd Avenue and on the east by 23rd Avenue.

Yesler's land development activities were not limited to the tracts included within his donation land claim. Of particular interest is H. L. Yesler's 2nd Addition (Volume 1 of Plats, page 216, filed October 7, 1882 by H. L. Yesler and others).⁶⁴ This plat is bounded by Howell Street on the north and by Pike Street on the south, and stretches from a half block west of 24th Avenue to 32nd Avenue. A small but very significant portion of this plat was purchased from Yesler by William Grose, an influential African American pioneer

Grose's Tract

In 1882, William Grose paid Henry Yesler \$1,000 in gold for approximately twelve acres of land in the East Madison District. The deed was filed June 30, 1882.⁶⁵

Grose's Tract was included as a part of H. L. Yesler's 2nd Addition to the City of Seattle when that plat was filed a few months later on October 7, 1882.⁶⁶ This inclusion appears to have been anticipated by both Grose and Yesler, because the legal description for Grose's property (recorded in the deed) includes both a "metes and bounds" description and a reference to the corresponding block and lot numbers of the plat.

⁶⁴ Bagley (p. 566) reports that the plat was filed June 23, 1882.

⁶⁵ Book 23 of Deeds, pp. 190–192. Esther Hall Mumford, *Seattle's Black Victorians 1852–1901* (Seattle: Ananse Press, 1980), p. 112, cites Volume 23, Deeds, page 190, June 13, 1882. This citation facilitated rapid access to the deed; however, the citation is not entirely correct. The deed is dated June 30, 1882, was filed for record that same date, and was recorded July 14, 1882.

⁶⁶ This plat was filed June 23, 1882 according to Bagley (p. 566), but on October 7, 1882 according to the plat itself (Volume 1 of Plats, page 216). Bagley's date suggests that the plat was filed a few days prior to Yesler's sale of the 12-acre tract to Grose; however, the dates in the official record suggest that Grose purchased the property prior to the filing of the plat.

Yesler's 2nd Addition is located south of Howell Street and thus was situated entirely within the City of Seattle, as it existed in the period from 1875 to 1883. Based on the legal description set forth in the deed, Grose's property was bounded on the north by the north margin of Howell Street, on the south by Olive Street, on the east by 27th Avenue, and on the west by the midline of Section 33, Township 25 North, Range 4 East, which corresponds approximately with the midblock line between 23rd Avenue and 24th Avenue. A house said to have belonged to Grose is located in the northwest corner of the tract.

A Short Biography of William Grose (1835-1898)

William Grose, an African American, came to Seattle around 1860 and became one of the most successful of Seattle's early pioneers.

Grose was born in 1835 in Washington, D. C.⁶⁷ to a free black restaurant owner.⁶⁸ At age 15, he left home to join the U.S. Navy.⁶⁹ In the course of his enlistment, he served in the command of Commodore Perry in East Asia.⁷⁰ He traveled to Japan for the signing of the Amity Treaty in 1854, and went on a rescue mission to the Arctic.⁷¹

Grose left the Navy at San Francisco following a shipboard injury. Shortly afterward, he went into the California gold fields and worked in the Montezuma, Columbia, and Sonora mining districts.⁷² He became a leader among the black miners, a position that "sometimes translated into 'defender' of the smaller brothers in the camps."⁷³

"He helped to form a western branch of the Underground Railroad, and because he spoke Spanish, he was delegated by black Californians to go to Panama to negotiate with the government" for an end to the practice of returning escaped slaves. Racial violence broke out in Panama following a series of provocations by white Americans enroute to the California goldfields. Grose was in Panama during an uprising and is reported to have "led several white women and children to safety."⁷⁴

⁶⁷ Schmid, p. 140, and Taylor, p. 16.

⁶⁸ Quintard Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle's Central District from 1870 Through the Civil Rights Era* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), p. 16.

⁶⁹ Mary Henry, "Grose, William (1835-1898)," *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History* (Essay 393, November 27, 1998, accessed February 2009). Henry cites Mary T. Henry, *Tribute: Seattle Public Places Named for Black People* (Seattle: Statice Press, 1997), 70, 71.

⁷⁰ Schmid, p. 140

⁷¹ Esther Hall Mumford, *Seattle's Black Victorians 1852-1901*, (Seattle: Ananse Press, 1980), p. 73. Mumford cites *Seattle Republican* (Special Edition), January 4, 1896.

⁷² Mumford, p. 74. Mumford cites *Seattle Republican* (Special Edition), January 4, 1896.

⁷³ Mumford, p. 74. Mumford cites *Seattle Republican* (Special Edition), January 4, 1896.

⁷⁴ Mumford, p. 73. Mumford cites *Seattle Republican* (Special Edition), January 4, 1896.

After returning to California, Grose helped collect money to facilitate publication of the *Elevator*, one of the first African American newspapers to be published on the west coast. In 1858, he was among those men who made arrangements with Governor Douglas of British Columbia for the emigration -- to Victoria and the Fraser River area -- of African Americans seeking a haven from California oppression.⁷⁵

The year of Grose's arrival in Seattle is not precisely known,⁷⁶ but it appears Grose worked in the region as a steward on a mailboat called *The Constitution*, which sailed from Victoria to Olympia with intermediate stops at Seattle and Tacoma.⁷⁷ In the course of one trip, he is said to have had a fortuitous meeting with Washington Governor Isaac Stevens (1818-1862). Grose found and kept safely a watch belonging to the governor. The governor was so impressed with the man that he urged him to move to Washington Territory.⁷⁸ Some believe Grose came to Seattle to operate a hotel at the request of Governor Stevens;⁷⁹ however, it appears he initially took employment doing what he knew best -- cooking -- at first working for others, then for himself beginning in 1876.⁸⁰ In August of that year, Grose opened his "Our House" restaurant on the south side of Yesler, just below First Avenue.⁸¹ He later added a barbershop.⁸²

Grose's restaurant attracted Seattle residents and men from around the Sound.⁸³ It became a popular stop for Seattle's mostly white populace.⁸⁴

Grose himself would have been hard not to notice. He stood six feet, four inches tall and weighed more than 400 pounds. He became known around the Sound as "Big Bill the Cook," an appellation apparently dating from the days when he kept a lunch counter in Rube Low's saloon.⁸⁵

In the spring of 1883 he built a three story hotel for workingmen on Yesler's Wharf which was also called "Our House."⁸⁶ The establishment was, at one time, the second largest hotel in the city, and "it was in his dual capacity as hotel owner and labor employer that he became friendly with Yesler, Denny, and other pioneers of Seattle."⁸⁷

⁷⁵ Mumford, pp. 74-75

⁷⁶ Schmid (p. 140) indicates that Grose arrived in 1859; Taylor (p. 16) suggests 1861; other writers give 1860 as the approximate year of his arrival.

⁷⁷ Mumford, p. 12.

⁷⁸ Henry, "Grose, William (1835-1898)."

⁷⁹ Schmid, p. 140.

⁸⁰ Mumford, pp. 74-75.

⁸¹ Mumford, p. 73. Mumford cites *Seattle Republican* (Special Edition), January 4, 1896.

⁸² Taylor, p. 16.

⁸³ Mumford, p. 75.

⁸⁴ Mary Henry, "Grose, William (1835-1898)."

⁸⁵ Mumford, pp. 43-44.

⁸⁶ Mumford, p. 75.

⁸⁷ Schmid, p. 140.

Grose befriended many workingmen as well, and extended credit to those in need of it.⁸⁸ Shipbuilder Robert Moran was apparently “staked” by William Grose when Moran arrived penniless in Seattle.⁸⁹ In an address before the 50th Annual Meeting of the Pioneer’s Association,

. . . Moran recalled that at age 19, with one dime in his pocket, he ate his first breakfast in Seattle at “Our House.” Mr. Grose told him that his “credit was good until he found work.” Passing his breakfast of pork sausages, flapjacks and coffee through a crescent that he had cut between the kitchen and the dining room, Mr. Grose called out “come and get it.”⁹⁰

Grose “ran the hotel until it was destroyed in the 1889 fire. Unfortunately it was not covered by insurance. Oral tradition has it that the hotel was sold shortly before the fire and that Mr. Grose returned the purchase money to the two young buyers following its destruction.”⁹¹ In another version of the story, Attorney J. E. Hawkins “recounts how William Grose sold his hotel for \$5,000. It later burned in the 1889 fire (the Great Fire, which on June 6, 1889 burned 30 downtown blocks to the ground). He looked up the new owner and returned the \$5,000.”⁹²

In 1870 Grose bought property at Sixth and James Street.⁹³ In 1888, he built four houses on the property and moved his family from their Yesler Way hotel into the largest of the four houses.⁹⁴ He rented out the others.⁹⁵

In 1882, he paid Henry Yesler \$1,000 in gold for twelve acres of land in the East Madison District, which he used as a ranch until the Fire of 1889.⁹⁶ After the hotel was destroyed in 1889, Grose retired to his ranch, which eventually became the nucleus of one of the city’s two nineteenth-century black residential districts.⁹⁷ In 1890, he built a home on his 12 acres of land.⁹⁸ Grose and his son, George, operated a truck farm after the move to their East Madison property.⁹⁹ Grose’s house, although altered, still stands at 1733 24th Avenue E.¹⁰⁰ This address is on the west side of 24th Avenue E. between Olive and

⁸⁸ Mumford, p. 75.

⁸⁹ Taylor, p. 50; Moran Brothers was the biggest of a dozen shipyards building boats in Seattle in 1900.

⁹⁰ Mumford, p. 75. Mumford cites *The Seattle Times*, September 5, 1949.

⁹¹ Mumford, p. 75. Mumford cites an interview with Mr. Leonard Dawson in April 1975 and a letter of Mrs. Oxendine, Grose’s daughter, dated November 24, 1936.

⁹² Henry, “Grose, William (1835-1898).”

⁹³ Mumford, p. 75. Mumford cites *Seattle Telegraph*, August 15, 1891, p. 5.

⁹⁴ Mumford, p. 110.

⁹⁵ Mumford, p. 85.

⁹⁶ Mumford, p. 112. Mumford cites Volume 23, Deeds, page 190, June 13, 1882.

⁹⁷ Taylor, p. 16.

⁹⁸ Henry, “Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History.”

⁹⁹ Mumford, p. 84.

¹⁰⁰ Mary Henry, “Grose, William (1835-1898).”

Howell, about 2-1/4 blocks south of Madison.

Although Mr. Grose could not write, he was a good businessman and appears to have accumulated considerable wealth. In 1891, the *Seattle Telegraph* reported that Grose was worth a quarter of a million dollars.¹⁰¹

William Grose was one of the founders, with Dr Samuel Burdett and Conrad Rideout, of the Cornerstone Grand Lodge of the York Masons in 1891.¹⁰² He was also a trustee of First African Methodist Episcopal Church and a member of the Washington Pioneer Association.¹⁰³ He died on July 27, 1898 in Seattle and is buried in Lake View Cemetery on Capitol Hill.¹⁰⁴ An obituary in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (July 27, 1898), rated him as one of the “most extensive taxpayers in the city.”¹⁰⁵ He appears to have been widely respected for his generosity, integrity, and honesty.

Quintard Taylor found it instructive to compare William Grose with Chin Gee-hee, a successful Chinese entrepreneur operating in Seattle during the 1890s:

Like Grose, Chin was a community banker and his hotel, like Grose’s Our House, was home to transient laborers. Moreover, Chin’s position as community liaison with powerful white politicians was analogous to Grose’s as representative of black Seattle through the 1890s. But Chin’s economic leverage in highly stratified Chinatown far surpassed Grose’s influence among Seattle’s blacks. Chin, who dispatched his countrymen in labor gangs, garnered leverage over both white employers and Chinese laborers while Grose never had the power to influence the employment of most of Seattle’s black work force or to determine community leaders. Furthermore, Grose, although a successful hotel proprietor and restaurateur, had no commercial links with East Coast or African mercantile interests comparable to those of Chin with his kinsmen in China.¹⁰⁶

Grose’s Property and the East Madison District

When William Grose bought his East Madison tract in 1882, he became the first black person to buy property in the area¹⁰⁷

The northern boundary of Seattle was Howell Street in the period from 1875 to 1883,¹⁰⁸

¹⁰¹ Mumford, p. 75. Mumford cites *Seattle Telegraph*, August 15, 1891, p. 5.

¹⁰² Taylor, p. 40.

¹⁰³ Henry, “Grose, William (1835-1898).”

¹⁰⁴ Henry, “Grose, William (1835-1898).” Another writer (Taylor, p. 35) asserts that Grose died in 1891.

¹⁰⁵ Schmid, p. 140.

¹⁰⁶ Taylor, pp. 113-114.

¹⁰⁷ Henry, “Grose, William (1835-1898).”

placing Grose's tract just inside the city limits when he acquired it in 1882. The areas taken away from the city in 1875 were reannexed in 1883 (along with additional contiguous parcels to the north and to the south),¹⁰⁹ placing the East Madison district entirely within the city by the time of its initial development.

Others African Americans bought land in the area. Allen Deans purchased East Madison property in 1887 and then sold two lots to David Fletcher. S. J. Collins and Isaac Evans bought land there in 1888, Walter Washington, James Blocker and Charles Harvey in 1889, and "enough during the 1890s to cause at least some people to think of the area as a 'colony of colored people.' But settlement was sparse until well after the turn of the century."¹¹⁰

Despite the early date of his purchase, Grose was not the first African American to live in the East Madison district. That distinction appears to belong to Seaborn and Alzada Collins and their son, William, who was called Jasper. In 1888 Mr. Collins, a mechanic and carpenter, bought property in the area and built a two-story house valued at \$1,000 between 27th Avenue and 28th Avenue, just north of Madison.¹¹¹

It was only after the destruction of his hotel-saloon business in the Seattle Fire that William Grose moved to the land he had previously used as a ranch.¹¹²

Other Large Central Area Plats Filed in the Territorial Period

Other Large Central Area Plats Filed in the Territorial Period include the Eastern Addition (Volume 1 of Plats, page 31, filed March 17, 1875 by Samuel Kinney), Yesler's 2nd Addition Supplemental (Volume 1 of Plats, page 249, filed April 7, 1883 by Philip H. Lewis), Yesler's 2nd Addition Supplemental (Volume 2 of Plats, page 21, filed July 30, 1883 by Angus Mackintosh), Young's Addition (Volume 2 of Plats, page 23, filed August 9, 1883 by D. T. Wheeler), the Madison Street Addition (Volume 2 of Plats, page 85, filed November 21, 1887 by A. B. Llewellyn), J. H. Rengstorff's Addition (Volume 2 of Plats, page 101, filed February 4, 1888 by J. H. Rengstorff), Renton's Addition (Volume 3 of Plats, page 118, filed May 18, 1889 by William Renton and others), Ayer & O'Hara's Addition (Volume 3 of Plats, page 112, filed May 6, 1889 by Robert N. McFadden and others), and White's Addition (Volume 3 of Plats, page 195, filed September 2, 1889 by Charles A. White).

Early Plats South of Yesler's donation land claim included the Judkins Addition (Filed August 4, 1869),¹¹³ and the Jackson Street Addition (Filed September 16, 1883; bounded by Washington, Dearborn, 24th and 21st).¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁸ Schmid, p. 73, Chart 14.

¹⁰⁹ Schmid, p. 73, Chart 14.

¹¹⁰ Mumford, pp. 109, 112-113

¹¹¹ Mumford, pp. 110, 112-113. Mumford cites *Post-Intelligencer*, January 1, 1889, p. 7

¹¹² Mumford, p. 113.

¹¹³ Bagley, p. 563.

Early Access to the Central Area

Some authors have suggested that the Central Area was cleared of timber by the late 19th century. Nyberg and Steinbrueck, for example, have reported that,

This district was logged off quite early; the logs being skidded down Yesler Way, which was then known as skid road, to the saw mill. This left a large, flat area suitable for residential development as soon as convenient transportation could be provided up the steep slopes from the business district.¹¹⁵

Another author, Mary T. Henry, has written that,

During the mid-1800s the area was logged off, creating an ideal location for residential development because of its proximity to the Central Business District. Logs were slid directly down "skid road" to Henry Yesler's sawmill. This road was later named Mill Street and eventually became Yesler Way.¹¹⁶

Henry goes on to say that,

With the cleared land and the arrival of the cable cars around 1888 to tackle the steep hills, old and new settlers began to build homes and to establish culturally rich communities in the area.¹¹⁷

In contrast, other writers report that forested areas were still extensive, particularly in the East Madison Street area, in the 1890s.

Early Streets and Public Transit

By 1865, "Yesler's Road" extended from Yesler's Mill through what is now the Central Area to present-day Leschi Park, and "McGilvra Road" followed the route of what is now Madison Street to McGilvra's home in Madison Park. Another road had also been cut through from "McGilvra Road" to the portage at Montlake¹¹⁸

An ordinance was passed June 8, 1876 to allow a contract to be issued for the regrading of Mill Street (now Yesler Way) from Fifth Avenue to Eighth Avenue; however, this

¹¹⁴ Bagley, p. 566.

¹¹⁵ Nyberg and Steinbrueck.

¹¹⁶ Henry, "Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History."

¹¹⁷ Henry, "Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History."

¹¹⁸ Myra L. Phelps, *Public Works in Seattle: A Narrative History. The Engineering Department 1875 – 1975* (Seattle: Seattle Engineering Department, 1978), p. 99.

work was not completed.¹¹⁹

The planking of Mill Street in 1879 is the first road surfacing project mentioned in city records.¹²⁰ This development suggests that Mill Street was no longer being used as a “skid road” at that date (assuming that it ever was used in that manner). This view is reinforced by the fact that Henry Yesler filed his plat for “H. L. Yesler’s 1st Addition” on October 7, 1882.¹²¹ The plat extended a block north and a half block south of Mill Street from Broadway to 23rd Avenue (it extended three blocks north of Mill Street between 20th and 23rd), and although the original plat was interrupted by an area not subdivided between what is now 13th Avenue and 15th Avenue (and although portions of the western end of the addition were replatted at different times for accommodate later developments such as Yesler Terrace), Yelser’s impulse to divide this portion of his donation claim into building lots does not make sense in the context of a continuing log skidding operation on Mill Street.

In 1884, a hack (wagon) line was started. It made daily trips out Jackson Street to Lake Washington.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Phelps, p. 6.

¹²⁰ Phelps, p. 99.

¹²¹ H. L. Yesler’s 1st Addition, Volume 1 of Plats, p. 215.

¹²² Nyberg and Steinbrueck.

Early Urbanization 1890 - 1918

Development of the Central Area began in earnest about 1889, a year that marked a turning point in the history of Seattle. The Seattle Fire, which destroyed much of downtown Seattle, occurred June 6, 1889, and the State of Washington entered the Union on November 11, 1889, ending Washington's territorial period.

Factors Contributing to Rapid Growth

Relatively rapid development of the Central Area in the period from 1890 to 1920 was almost certainly the result of general population growth throughout the city. This growth accelerated after transcontinental railroads made the city more accessible from the east. The Northern Pacific reached Seattle in 1894 and the Great Northern reached Seattle in 1896.¹²³

The platting of the Central Area between 1875 and 1912, combined with improved access in the form of cable cars and street railways, made the Central Area a convenient choice for immigrants looking for a place to live.

Population Distribution in 1890

By 1890, the population of Seattle had grown to 42,837, a 1,212% increase over the total population of 3,533 in 1880.

The city in 1890 was divided into four wards. The bulk of what is today the Central Area was situated in the Second Ward between Madison Street and Jackson Street, though portions of what is now the Central Area extend south of Jackson into what was then the First Ward and north across Madison into what was then the Third Ward.

The Central Area in 1890 was almost certainly characterized by a racial composition similar to that of the city as a whole. The vast majority (42,056 out of 42,837, or 98%) of Seattle residents at the time were white (European Americans). This preponderance of white residents was fairly consistent throughout all four wards of the city (in the First Ward, 11,108 of 11,530, or 96%, were white; in the Second Ward, 9,204 of 9,377, or 98%; in the Third Ward, 9,415 of 9,513, or 99%; and in the Fourth Ward, 12,329 of 12,417, or 99%). The four wards fanned out from a point in Elliott Bay to cover the entire area of the city; however, most of the population in each ward lived in, or very near to, what is now downtown Seattle.

The 286 black individuals living in the city in 1890 (0.67% of the total population) were more concentrated in the First and Second Wards, although African American residents -- and property owners -- could be found in every part of the city. Schmid reports that in 1890 most African American Seattleites were living near the center of the city on 5th to

¹²³ Schmid, p. 8.

14th Avenues and noted that the two black churches were located at 5th and Pike and 11th and Pike, respectively.¹²⁴

The Asian community consisted of 359 Chinese and 125 Japanese residents, together comprising 484 people or 1.13% of the total population. Most of these individuals (324 or 67%) lived in the First Ward and were concentrated in what is now known as the International District.

The majority of the members of the tiny Indian (i.e., Native Americans) community (11 of the 42,837 Seattle residents counted, or 0.03% of the total population) were located in the Third Ward, although the actual Native American presence was probably much greater.

Population of Seattle in 1890¹²⁵

Ward	White	Black	Chinese	Japanese	Indian	Total
1	11,108	97	228	96	1	11,530
2	9,204	111	49	12	1	9,377
3	9,415	53	31	7	7	9,513
4	12,329	25	51	10	2	12,417
	42,056	286	359	125	11	42,837

Wards in 1890

Ward 1 – “The First Ward includes all that part of the city within the following boundaries: Commencing at the intersection of the center line of Yesler avenue with the center line of South Tenth street and running thence south through the center of South Tenth street to Jackson street; thence east on a line with the center of Jackson street to the east boundary of the city [Lake Washington]; thence following said east boundary to the south boundary of the city [about Hanford Street east of 16th Avenue South and about Andover Street west of 16th Avenue South]; thence west along the south boundary of the city to the west boundary of the city [Elliott Bay]; thence north along the west boundary of the city to a point on Elliott Bay opposite West Yesler avenue; thence east in a straight line through the center of West Yesler avenue to the place of beginning.”¹²⁶ The First Ward included the portion of the city south of Yesler to the west of South Tenth, and south of Jackson to the east of South Tenth embracing most of Pioneer Square, the International District, Judkins Park, North Beacon Hill, Yesler/Atlantic, the southern

¹²⁴ Schmid, p. 137.

¹²⁵ United States Census, 1890.

¹²⁶ Polk’s Seattle City Directory, 1890, p. 72.

portion of Leschi, the northern portion of Mt. Baker, and Rainier Valley .

Ward 2 – “The Second Ward includes all the part of the city situated north of the First Ward and south of a line running through the center of Madison Street from the west boundary to the east boundary of the city [actually the north boundary of the city at Galer].”¹²⁷ The Second Ward thus included Denny Blaine (Harrison), Madrona, the northern portion of Leschi, the bulk of the Central Area including Squire Park and Renton Hill, First Hill south of Madison, and downtown between Yesler and Madison.

Ward 3 – “The Third Ward includes all that part of the city included within the following boundaries: Commencing at the northwest corner of the Second Ward, and running thence on the west boundary of the city [Elliott Bay] to a point on Elliott Bay opposite Stewart street; thence on a line with the center of Stewart street to Howard street [now Yale Avenue]; thence along the center of said Howard street to point 346 feet west and 30 feet north of the northwest corner of blk number 29 of Pontius’ addition to Seattle [i.e., the intersection of the center lines of Yale Avenue and Mercer Street]; thence east [actually west] to the center line of Elaine street [the continuation of Yale Avenue north of Mercer]; thence north on a line with the center of Elaine street to the north boundary of the city [at about Lynn Street west of 15th Avenue and at about Galer Street east of 15th Avenue]; thence east and south on the north and east boundary lines of the city to the northeast corner of the Second Ward; thence west on the north line of the Second Ward to the point of beginning.”¹²⁸ The Third Ward thus included most of Capitol Hill, First Hill north of Madison, Eastlake, and downtown between Madison and Stewart.

Ward 4 – “The Fourth Ward includes all that part of the city situated northwest of the Third Ward”¹²⁹ The Fourth Ward included Belltown, Queen Anne, Denny Hill, and most of Cascade and South Lake Union.

Cable Cars

Cable cars appeared on Yesler Way in 1888 and on Madison Street in 1890.

The Cable Railway on Yesler Way and Jackson Street

In 1887, a group of capitalists organized the Seattle Construction Company to build a cable railway designed so that cars traveled eastbound on Mill Street from the corner of Second and Mill (now Occidental and Yesler) to the western shore of Lake Washington and then returned on Jackson Street one block to the south.¹³⁰ That same year, Mill Street was renamed Yesler Way.¹³¹

¹²⁷ Polk’s Seattle City Directory, 1890, p. 72.

¹²⁸ Polk’s Seattle City Directory, 1890, p. 72.

¹²⁹ Polk’s Seattle City Directory, 1890, p. 72.

¹³⁰ Leslie Blanchard, *The Street Railway Era in Seattle: A Chronicle of Six Decades* (Forty Fort, PA: Harold E. Cox, 1968), p.14.

¹³¹ Phelps, p. 226.

The western shore of Lake Washington had long been popular as a recreation area; so popular, in fact, that existing stage transportation was sorely taxed to accommodate the crowds that frequented it during the summer months. This situation was the primary incentive for the construction of the cable line. Real estate speculation was also an important consideration. Choice though unsettled land lay along the proposed route, most of which had been logged off and was ripe for building and settlement. Henry L. Yesler, who owned large tracts of cleared land in the area, donated 40 acres, and one W. H. Hill gave 17-1/4 more.¹³²

Construction began in 1888, and regular service on the line commenced September 28 of that year.¹³³

Real estate boomed, 1,569 houses were built along the line that summer, a pavilion was erected on the lake shore with a seating capacity for 4,000 persons and cars made connections with the steamships *Kirkland* and *C. C. Calkins* running to Mercer Island and the east side of Lake Washington.¹³⁴

After the line was purchased by Seattle City Railway Company August 25, 1890, the lakeside trackage connecting the eastern foot of Yesler and the huge trestle at the eastern end of Jackson Street was abandoned and the loop connecting the two streets was moved west to Rainier Street (now 30th Avenue).¹³⁵

Conversion of the Jackson Street portion of the line to an electric railway was completed in June 1900.¹³⁶

A contract to pave Yesler Way and Jackson Street (as well as Washington Street, Main Street, Occidenttal Avenue, Second Avenue South and Thrid Avenue South) with brick was let on March 9, 1901.¹³⁷

Madison Street Cable Railway

The Madison Street Railway was incorporated September 17, 1889 but construction on the line did not begin until early 1890. By July, service was operating from Western Avenue to the powerhouse and car barn located between 21st Avenue and 22nd Avenue on

¹³² Blanchard, p.14.

¹³³ Blanchard, p.14.

¹³⁴ Blanchard, p.16. Blanchard quotes from "Seattleites Recall Cable Car Days," *The Seattle Times*, September 19, 1965.

¹³⁵ Blanchard, p.16.

¹³⁶ Blanchard, p. 21.

¹³⁷ Phelps, p. 100.

Madison. The train ran “mostly through the woods, and the passengers felt almost as though they were making a train journey to another town.”¹³⁸

“Beyond the powerhouse, most of the line ran through virgin timberlands, through which it was necessary to clear a right of way. The company, inspired by the example of the Yesler Way system obtained a large tract of land on the lake shore and developed it into more or less a replica of Leschi Park,” and although the cars sometimes carried very few passengers during the week, “on some Sundays as many as 20,000 people made the scenic trip through the tall timber to the shore of the lake.”¹³⁹

Double track reached all the way to Lake Washington by the end of the 1890. A lucrative freight business generated additional income for this cable car line.¹⁴⁰ The powerhouse was replaced in 1911 by a new facility near the corner of Madison and Broadway.¹⁴¹

The cable car lines on Madison and Yesler (as well as a third line on James Street) were still in operation in 1910.¹⁴²

Division of Yesler’s Claim in the Early Years of Statehood

Most of Yesler’s claim east of 20th Avenue was platted in the period between 1890 and 1912. The work of subdividing the property began with establishment of the Walla Walla Addition (Volume 5 of Plats, page 81, filed May 10, 1890 by H. H. Hungate). The plat was apparently associated with a development syndicate from Walla Walla.¹⁴³ It is bounded on the south and west by Alder Street and 20th Avenue and extends a short distance beyond Marion Street and 23rd Avenue at the north and east. This plat appears to have been the first Central Area plat to be filed after Washington was admitted to the Union. It was followed by the Washington Place Addition (Volume 7 of Plats, page 10, filed August 5, 1890 by George M. Boman and others), located at the southeast corner of the original donation land claim. (Another plat of the same name was filed March 13, 1890 by Percy Rochester; see Volume 5 of Plats, page 31).

Yesler died in 1892. Platting of his claim continued only after a long pause punctuated by the financial panic of 1893, which dampened economic activity throughout the nation for a number of years, and by the discovery of gold in the Klondike, which helped to foment the boom economy of the late 1890s.

¹³⁸ Blanchard, p. 30. Blanchard indicates that the quoted material is from Seattle’s Cable Railways. p. 9.

¹³⁹ Blanchard, p. 32.

¹⁴⁰ Blanchard, p. 30.

¹⁴¹ Blanchard, p. 31. (See caption for Fig. 33.)

¹⁴² Schmid, p. 63.

¹⁴³ Bagley, p. 569.

A number of houses were built along Yesler Way in the Sarah B. Yesler Tracts, a collection of unrecorded plats that may have been developed piecemeal in response to the desire for housing along the cable railway.

Plats established as the economy roared back to life at the turn of the century include the Gilt Edge Addition (Volume 9 of Plats, page 38, filed September 12, 1899 by A. K. Russell), Baird's Subdivision Tract T of S. B. Yesler's D C (Volume 9 of Plats, page 82, filed April 15, 1901 by Catherine P. Crane), the Yesler Estate Addition (Volume 10 of Plats, page 6, filed December 18, 1901 by Yesler Estate, Inc.), and the Stander Addition (Volume 10 of Plats, page 7, filed January 3, 1902 by A. F. Stander and others)

A group of small plats were established along the eastern edge of Yesler's donation land claim in the years immediately following the turn of the century. These included Poncin's Tract D Addition (Volume 9 of Plats, page 98, filed September 25, 1901 by Catherine P. Crane), Thirtieth (30th) Avenue Addition (Volume 10 of Plats, page 24, filed April 29, 1902 by Alice C. Morler), Kelsey's 1st Addition (Volume 10 of Plats, page 38, filed July 17, 1902 by J. E. Kelsey), Cherry Street Heights (Volume of 10 Plats, page 59, filed January 21, 1903 by Blanche K. Grambs), and Baird's Tract F Addition (Volume 10 of Plats, page 62, filed February 11, 1903 by Emmagene Baird).

The subdivision of Yesler's claim approached completion with the formation of Richard's Addition (Volume 11 of Plats, page 11, filed October 14, 1903 by Eleanore D. Richards), a small plat south of Yesler Way either side of 26th Avenue, and the organization of the Barclay Addition (Volume 14 of Plats, page 63, filed February 1, 1907 by W. L. Barclay) and the Burgert Addition (Volume 17 of Plats, page 51, filed February 1, 1909 by Ida J. Burgert)

Gamma Poncin's Addition (Volume of 20 Plats, page 51, filed February 21, 1912 by Yesler Estate, Inc.) appears to have been assembled from a collection of disconnected "leftover" tracts. The filing of the Gamma Poncin's Addition in 1912 marks the completion of Central Area platting until 1995, when the Yesler/Atlantic (Volume 172 of Plats, page 60, filed February 17, 1995 by Homesight) was filed for a piece of property within Yesler's donation land claim.

Other Large Central Area Plats Filed After Statehood

Other large Central Area plats filed after statehood include the Buckius Addition (Volume 7 of Plats, page 85, filed June 10, 1891 by Mary C. Buckius¹⁴⁴), the Renton Hill Addition (Volume 8 of Plats, page 68, filed November 18, 1892 by Sackman - Phillips), and Webster's Madison Street Addition (Volume 10 of Plats, page 1, filed October 18, 1901 by James F. McElroy).

¹⁴⁴ According to Bagley (p. 570), the Buckius Addition was "[p]latted by the heirs of Sylvanus Buckius, who was a boyhood friend of Henry L. Yesler, from whom Buckius purchased" the property.

The Central Area Becomes a Neighborhood

As more and more immigrants flowed into the Puget Sound region, the Central Area “quickly developed into a middle class residential neighborhood” and “institutions such as churches, synagogues, and hospitals, public schools, fire stations and libraries following in due order.”¹⁴⁵

Churches

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church

The present Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, at 820 18th Avenue, was erected in 1904¹⁴⁶ However, the parish had been established ten years earlier when, on December 8, 1894, Fr. Victor Garrand, SJ, (1847-1925) formally dedicated the new home of the Parish and School of the Immaculate Conception near the intersection of Broadway and Madison Street on the eastern slope of First Hill.¹⁴⁷ The site had previously been occupied by a large wood-frame house that was used by the Woman's Christian Temperance Union.¹⁴⁸ This structure was replaced by a four-story brick-and-stone building housing a school, a parish chapel, and apartments for Jesuit clergy and faculty. The original parish home survives today as the Garrand Building on the Seattle University campus.¹⁴⁹

The existing Church of the Immaculate Conception is the oldest standing Catholic Church in Seattle. The Italianate style building was designed by Williams & Clark. The brick structure has a wood roof; the twin towers are constructed of wood and capped by gold cupolas. The seating capacity of 950 made the building the largest assembly hall in Seattle when it was completed.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ Nyberg and Steinbrueck.

¹⁴⁶ Henry, “Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History.”

¹⁴⁷ “Jesuits dedicate Parish and School of the Immaculate Conception, now Seattle University's Garrand Building, on December 8, 1894,” *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History* (Essay 3265, May 9, 2001, accessed January 29, 2009). HistoryLink.org cites: Walt Crowley, *Seattle University: A Century of Jesuit Education* (Seattle: Seattle University, 1991).

¹⁴⁸ “Jesuits purchase future Seattle University campus on November 6, 1890,” *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History* (Essay 3264, May 9, 2001, accessed January 29, 2009). HistoryLink.org cites: Walt Crowley, *Seattle University: A Century of Jesuit Education* (Seattle: Seattle University, 1991).

¹⁴⁹ “Jesuits dedicate Parish and School of the Immaculate Conception, now Seattle University's Garrand Building, on December 8, 1894.”

¹⁵⁰ Dave Wilma, “Seattle Landmarks: Church of the Immaculate Conception (1904),” *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History* (Essay 3220, April 19, 2001; accessed December 6, 2009).

Although originally built and administered by the Jesuits, diocesan priests assumed the pastoral duties in 1929. The parish initially served families of the wealthy First Hill neighborhood; however, the move to the east, the construction of St. James Cathedral and the changing character of the Central Area made the Church of the Immaculate Conception the focus a much more ethnically diverse community. The church was designated a Seattle Landmark in 1977.¹⁵¹

First African Methodist Episcopal Church

The First African Methodist Episcopal Church, located at 1522 14th Avenue (about a half block north of Madison Street where it intersects with both Pike Street and 14th Avenue), is the home of the oldest black church in Seattle. It is part of the African Methodist Episcopal Church founded 1816 in Philadelphia by Richard Allen.¹⁵²

A group put together in 1886 to operate a Sunday school (which was held in various homes under the leadership of Seaborn J. Collins) became the core of the church when it was instituted about four years later.¹⁵³

“The church was organized in early 1890 at a meeting in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Lawrence near what is now 19th and Madison. Present were S. J. Collins, I. I. Walker John T, Gayton, Milton and Lucretia Roy, Charles H. Harvey, and several others.”¹⁵⁴ Reverend Thomas was the first pastor.¹⁵⁵

The congregation initially met January 1890 at a restaurant, but the second meeting was above a wagon shop in Stewart’s Hall located near 20th and Madison. The members continued to meet there until September 1890, when the site of the present church was purchased.¹⁵⁶

Reverend L. S. Blakeney was serving as pastor when the church was incorporated on August 13, 1891.¹⁵⁷ The signers of the incorporation papers included Reverend Blakeney,

¹⁵¹ Wilma, “Seattle Landmarks: Church of the Immaculate Conception (1904).”

¹⁵² Mary T. Henry, “First African Methodist Episcopal Church (Seattle)” *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History* (Essay 1621, December 31, 1998). Henry cites: Esther Hall Mumford, *Seattle’s Black Victorians 1852-1901*(Seattle: Ananse Press, 1980); *Cornerstone of Faith; 95 Years Serving God 1886-1981* (Seattle: First African Methodist Episcopal Church, 1981). Henry calls the First A. M. E. Church the oldest black church.

¹⁵³ Henry, “First African Methodist Episcopal Church (Seattle).”

¹⁵⁴ Mumford, p.148.

¹⁵⁵ Henry, “First African Methodist Episcopal Church (Seattle).”

¹⁵⁶ Mumford, p. 148.

¹⁵⁷ Henry, “First African Methodist Episcopal Church (Seattle).”

Seaborn J. Collins, Milton Roy, George H. Grose, Robert R. Brown, Alfred P. Freeman, and James C. Blocker.¹⁵⁸

The congregation met in a large house located at the present site of the church. This building was known as the Jones Street Church after the street on which it was situated (14th Avenue was called Jones Street at the time). The structure later became known as Lee's Chapel. The building was remodeled in 1899 and continued to serve the congregation until a new church was built at the site in 1912. The new structure was erected utilizing memorial windows imported from Italy and custom-made church pews fabricated to perfectly fit the sanctuary. In 1923, two lots immediately to the north of the original church property were purchased.¹⁵⁹

The church was designated a Seattle landmark in 1984.¹⁶⁰

Hospitals

Providence Hospital, designed and built 1907-1912, stands on a hill at 17th Avenue and East Cherry and features a tower visible from miles around.¹⁶¹ This is the third and largest hospital built by the Sisters of Providence.¹⁶² It was designed by Somervell & Cote. When the building permit was issued in 1909, it was thought to be the most expensive structure erected in Seattle.¹⁶³

First Central Area Public Schools Open in 1890 and 1891

T. T. Minor School

The T. T. Minor School, at East Union Street and 18th Avenue, was the first permanent public school in the Central Area.

In August 1889, The Seattle School Board discussed the construction of four new schools including one to be built in the Renton Addition near the northern end of the Central Area.¹⁶⁴ The other buildings were the Mercer School, the Columbia School, and the

¹⁵⁸ Mumford, p. 148.

¹⁵⁹ Henry, "First African Methodist Episcopal Church (Seattle)."

¹⁶⁰ Henry, "First African Methodist Episcopal Church (Seattle)."

¹⁶¹ David A. Rash, "Somervell & Cote," in Jeffrey Karl Ochsner (ed.), *Shaping Seattle Architecture: A Historical Guide to the Architects* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), p. 122; and Henry, "Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History."

¹⁶² Crowley, p. 144.

¹⁶³ Rash, "Somervell & Cote," p. 122.

¹⁶⁴ Thompson and Marr, p. 220.

Rainier School.¹⁶⁵ Architect Charles W. Saunders drew up plans for all four buildings, each of which would be a two story wood frame structure with four rooms on each floor and a large basement.¹⁶⁶

As plans were being finalized, a tragic accident took the life of one of the School Board's most prominent members, Thomas T. Minor, who took a leading role in Seattle following his arrival in 1883 and served as mayor of Seattle from 1886 to 1888.¹⁶⁷

The building at East Union and 18th was named T. T. Minor School on July 21, 1890 and opened September 17, 1890 with over 200 students in grades 1 - 6. The students came from a large area extending from Broadway to Lake Washington. This draw area was later divided up when schools such as Randell (later called Madrona) and Lake (later called McGilvra), opened.¹⁶⁸

Overcrowding was eased in 1894 with the addition of four rooms to the east side of the building, and again in 1900, when another four rooms, in an addition designed by Josenhans & Allen, were opened to the west. By the 1901-02 school year, 838 students were enrolled at Minor.¹⁶⁹

The School for the Deaf was transferred to Minor from Washington in 1921, necessitating the addition of portables on the playground south of the building.”¹⁷⁰

Randell / Madrona School

The Randell School (which later evolved into the Madrona School) was also opened in 1890. It was located at 33rd Avenue and East Union Street just beyond the eastern edge of the Central Area. The site was a portion of a property owned by George and Emma Randell. An old barn at the site was converted to a two-room school and named the Randell School. By 1902, the school had grown to 176 students with three teachers, and the number of classrooms had doubled.¹⁷¹

The following year, the district purchased part of an adjacent five-acre tract to enlarge the school's site. In 1904, an eight-room wood frame building was constructed in accordance with the “model school” plan of district architect James Stephen. The old converted barn was torn down and two portables were placed at the north end of the block. The new school was named Madrona. There was no playground, so the children played in the

¹⁶⁵ Jeffrey Karl Ochsner, “Charles W. Saunders” in Jeffrey Karl Ochsner (ed.), *Shaping Seattle Architecture: A Historical Guide to the Architects* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), p. 35.

¹⁶⁶ Thompson and Marr, p. 220.

¹⁶⁷ Thompson and Marr, p. 220.

¹⁶⁸ Thompson and Marr, p. 220.

¹⁶⁹ Thompson and Marr, p. 220.

¹⁷⁰ Thompson and Marr, p. 221.

¹⁷¹ Thompson and Marr, p. 189.

streets or in nearby wooded lots. In 1909, the portables were demolished and the lumber sold to a family who used it to build a house a few blocks from the school.¹⁷²

The Madrona school grew rapidly as the surrounding area attracted more residents. By the 1916-17 school year, enrollment had reached 505 and portables were again in use. A brick addition contained eight classrooms, a domestic science room, a shop, an auditorium, and a lunch room was constructed that year.¹⁷³

Rainier School

The Rainier School was built on the south side of King Street between 23rd Avenue and 24th Avenue¹⁷⁴ and served the south end of the Central Area. It was designed by Charles W. Saunders and was completed in 1891 utilizing the plan employed in the construction of T. T. Minor and two other school built the previous year.¹⁷⁵ The Rainier School was closed in 1940.¹⁷⁶

More Public Schools Open in the Early Twentieth Century

Longfellow School

The Longfellow School opened in 1902 as the 20th Avenue School, one of eight grade schools built to keep pace with the city's mushrooming population. It was built on a portion of what is now the Meany Middle School campus at the southeast corner of Capitol Hill utilizing a "model school" design that could easily be expanded. The area was served only by a few narrow dirt streets and by the cable car line operating on Madison Street a few blocks to the south when the Seattle School District acquired the site.

Midway through the first year, the name of the school was changed to honor Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, a 19th century American poet.¹⁷⁷ During that year, the school had 549 students in grades one through eight who were taught by twelve teachers. A new wing with eight classrooms was added in 1907.¹⁷⁸

A former student reported that she

. . . could never forget the assemblies, which were held in the halls . . . we sat on the steps leading to the upper floors. Back of the school on the northeast side was a pasture, where we used to play stump tag. A

¹⁷² Thompson and Marr, pp. 189-190.

¹⁷³ Thompson and Marr, p. 190.

¹⁷⁴ Polk's Seattle City Directory, 1912, p. 87; also see Baist Map 1912.

¹⁷⁵ Ochsner, "Charles W. Saunders," p. 35.

¹⁷⁶ Thompson and Marr, pp. 205-206

¹⁷⁷ Thompson and Marr, p. 214.

¹⁷⁸ Thompson and Marr, p. 214.

riding academy was in front of the building. Vacant lots and woods surrounded it on all sides. Picking blackberries was our common job going back and forth to school.¹⁷⁹

In 1936, the school acquired the Seattle Riding and Driving Academy property to use as a playground.¹⁸⁰

Walla Walla School

Another school, serving the heart of the Cenral Area, opened at the northeast corner of East Cherry Street and 24th Avenue in 1902.¹⁸¹ This was the Walla Walla School, which takes its name from a temporary predecessor located in a storefront at 21st Avenue and East James Street in the Walla Walla Addition, a plat located a short distance to the west of the permanent school.¹⁸² (The permanent school is separated from the Walla Walla Addition by the Barclay Addition, a plat which was not filed until 1907.)

The Walla Walla School was designed by Saunders & Lawton.¹⁸³ It is a Colonial Revival structure based on one of the “model school” plan developed by architect James Stephen.¹⁸⁴

The Walla Walla School was renamed the Horace Mann School in 1921.¹⁸⁵

Franklin / Washington School

The Franklin School, “an impressive old-world style building” (actually a late Queen Anne, early Tudor Revival design with some Craftsman detailing), was named for Benjamin Franklin and opened in the 1906-07 school year.¹⁸⁶ It was erected on a site bounded on the north by Washington Street, on the west by 18th Avenue, on the south by Main Street, and on the east by 19th Avenue.¹⁸⁷ It served 316 students in grades 1-8 and also housed the High School Annex, which moved to Franklin from Summit School. In 1907-08, the main school on Broadway was renamed Washington High School, so the secondary school program at Franklin was renamed the Washington High School Annex.

¹⁷⁹ These observations were apparently recorded in 1950 and were made by Vera Waller, a student at Longfellow in the early years who later became a math teacher at the school, later known as Edmond S. Meany Junior High. Waller is quoted by Thompson and Marr, p. 214.

¹⁸⁰ Thompson and Marr, p. 214.

¹⁸¹ Thompson and Marr, p. 195.

¹⁸² Thompson and Marr, p. 195.

¹⁸³ Sally B. Woodbridge and Roger Montgomery, *A Guide to Architecture in Washington State* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980), p. 151.

¹⁸⁴ Thompson and Marr, p. 195.

¹⁸⁵ Thompson and Marr, p. 195.

¹⁸⁶ Thompson and Marr, pp. 300.

¹⁸⁷ Baist Map 1912.

When the high school was renamed Broadway in 1908-09, the program at Franklin became Franklin High School. When Seattle's high school enrollment increased the following year, the elementary program was closed at Franklin, and the school operated solely as a high school from 1909 to 1912.¹⁸⁸

When a new high school was opened in the Mt. Baker neighborhood in September 1912, the Franklin School again became a grade school and the name was changed to the Washington School, a name derived from the high school program housed there in 1907-08. In addition to regular classes for grades 1-8, there were four special education classes under Nellie Goodhue. Kindergarten classes were added the following year. The School for the Deaf occupied four classrooms at Washington after it was moved there from Longfellow in the latter half of 1912. The special education classes were transferred to another building in 1917. The School for the Deaf moved to Minor on October 1, 1921.¹⁸⁹

Leschi School

In 1906, the Seattle School Board purchased a some land where a florist named O'Brien had operated a rose garden and green house. Construction of the Leschi School began at the site (now addressed as 135 32nd Avenue) in February 1909. The building was similar in style to the structures at the Greenwood, Hawthorne, and Emerson schools, all of which featured Jacobean details, steeply-pitched roofs, walls built of red brick with terra cotta trim, and pointed archways.¹⁹⁰

The eight room school served approximately 300 students in grades 1 - 8 until 1918-19 when enrollment rose to 371. At that time, the playrooms in the basement were converted into two additional classrooms. Because the school had no facilities for manual training or home economics, once a week older students hurriedly ate their lunches and walked over to the Walla Walla School (later called Horace Mann), located about four blocks north and eight blocks west, for instruction in these subjects.¹⁹¹

Colman School

When the Jackson Street regrade project necessitated the demolition of South School in 1909, the Seattle School Board authorized purchase of a tract of land to the east at Atlantic Street and 24th Avenue South for a new school. A 17 room, three story brick building, designed by James Stephen, was erected on the 2.2 acre site and opened January 24, 1910. The Jacobean style "fireproof" structure was built utilizing the nine-room "model school" design of the time but was made T-shaped by the addition of an eight-room wing at the north end. Its first year, the school served 519 pupils in grades one through seven. By 1913-14, the school was also serving kindergarten students and eighth graders and enrollment reached 626. On January 29, 1918, the school was renamed

¹⁸⁸ Thompson and Marr, pp. 300-301.

¹⁸⁹ Thompson and Marr, p. 301.

¹⁹⁰ Thompson and Marr, p. 175.

¹⁹¹ Thompson and Marr, p. 175.

for James M. Colman, a Seattle engineer who helped develop the waterfront and completed the railroad that carried coal from Newcastle and Renton to the edge of Elliott Bay.¹⁹²

Harrison School

When agents for the company that operated the cable car on Madison Street approached the Seattle School Board with a proposed to sell the District a prospective site for a school near the corner of 32nd Avenue and East Republican Street, the District accepted the offer and a new school, named for Benjamin Harrison, the 23rd President of the United States, opened at the site in September 1913 with grades one through four. The architectural drawings suggest that the District had planned to expand the building from six classroom to twenty-five, but the expansion was never undertaken. In fact, the district erected and roofed only the first floor of the standard nine-room model school being used at the time.¹⁹³

Municipal Services 1894 - 1919

Fire Stations

The oldest structure built to house fire apparatus in the Central Area, the original Fire Station #6, was a wood frame, foursquare style firehouse erected at the southwest corner of 23rd Avenue South and Yesler Way in 1894.¹⁹⁴ The original structure was replaced by the existing Art Deco building in 1931. Woodbridge attributes the design of the present fire station to Dudley Stewart.¹⁹⁵ The new building was opened in 1932,¹⁹⁶ and is a designated Seattle Landmark.

Old Firehouse #23, at 722 18th Avenue, was built in 1909.¹⁹⁷ Woodbridge calls this building the Cherry Hill Neighborhood Center and attributes the original fire station design to Everett & Baker.¹⁹⁸ The building was altered in 1970¹⁹⁹ according to a design prepared by Ted Bower, who adapted the structure for use by the Central Area Motivtion Program (CAMP) and as a community center.²⁰⁰ The building is a designated Seattle Landmark.

¹⁹² Thompson and Marr, p. 205.

¹⁹³ Thompson and Marr, p. 156.

¹⁹⁴ Richard Schneider, *Imges of America: Seattle Fire Department* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishers, 2007), p. 25.

¹⁹⁵ Woodbridge, p. 152.

¹⁹⁶ Schneider, p. 25.

¹⁹⁷ Woodbridge, p. 150.

¹⁹⁸ Woodbridge, p. 150.

¹⁹⁹ Woodbridge, p. 150.

²⁰⁰ Crowley, p. 144.

The original Fire Station #34 at 633 32nd Avenue East, a single story Queen Anne style structure with colonial detailing, was designed by City Architect Daniel R. Huntington and built in 1914. It served the northeast corner of the Central Area as well as areas to the east. This original station was replaced with a building designed by Hobbs/Fukui built in 1971.²⁰¹

Fire Station No. 12 at 33rd Avenue E and E Union Street was also designed by City Architect Daniel R. Huntington and was completed in 1919.²⁰² The station served the Madrona and Central Area neighborhood until 1972, when it was closed and then remodeled to become the Madrona-Sally Goldmark Branch of the Seattle Public Library.²⁰³

Libraries

The Henry L. Yesler Memorial Branch of the Seattle Public Library, at the northeast corner of 23rd Avenue and Yesler Way, was designed by Somervell & Cote in association with Harlan Thomas and completed in 1914.²⁰⁴ The library, which was expanded in the early years of the 21st century with a dramatically modern addition designed by Walter Schack, is now known as the Douglas-Truth Branch and is a designated Seattle Landmark.

Housing Stock

The Central Area contains some of the city's oldest housing stock, the earliest examples of which date from the mid-1880s. Particularly fine examples include the following:

The 23rd Avenue Houses Group, 812-828 23rd Avenue (built 1892-93),²⁰⁵ together designated a Seattle landmark in 1979.

A structure known as the Victorian House, at 1414 S. Washington Street (built 1900),²⁰⁶ designated a Seattle landmark in 1979.

James Washington Jr. Home and Studio, at 1816 26th Avenue (built 1918),²⁰⁷ designated a Seattle landmark in 1992.

²⁰¹ Woodbridge, p. 175.

²⁰² Thomas Veith, "Daniel R. Huntington" in Jeffrey Karl Ochsner (ed.), *Shaping Seattle Architecture: A Historical Guide to the Architects* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), p. 116.

²⁰³ David Wilma, "Madrona-Sally Goldmark Branch, The Seattle Public Library," *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History* (Essay 4034, April 3, 2009; accessed July 4, 2009).

²⁰⁴ Rash, "Somervell & Cote," p. 120.

²⁰⁵ Henry, "Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History."

²⁰⁶ Henry, "Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History."

²⁰⁷ Henry, "Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History."

The Yesler Houses, at 103, 107 and 109 23rd Avenue, as a group designated a Seattle landmark in 1998.

The Central Area was initially a neighborhood of single-family houses. In the 1890s and the first few years of the twentieth century, Queen Anne style structures and vernacular houses with Queen Anne elements predominated, though a few Stick style and Shingle style houses were also built in the Central Area. After the turn of the century, classic boxes and other American Foursquare designs, as well as Prairie style and Craftsman style homes, including bungalows, joined the Victorian era structures. Low-rise apartments began to appear in the first quarter of the twentieth century.

Farms and Greenhouses

At the turn of the century, parts of the Central Area were still being farmed, and nurseries were not uncommon. The John Leitha Nursery is an example. His greenhouse operation covered a couple of blocks at 14th Avenue between Yesler Way and Fir Street. A "Market Garden" consumed several more blocks just west of the greenhouses.²⁰⁸

William Grose and his son, George, operated a truck farm after the move to their East Madison ranch about 1890. Robert A. Clark and his wife Annie operated a farm in the East Madison district for three years starting in 1895. Frank Anderson, who worked for a while as a barber, established a dairy on 21st Avenue, which he maintained for a few years.²⁰⁹

Diversity in the Central Area

From the earliest years of its development, the Central Area has been a diverse neighborhood. People from a variety of racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds have made the Central Area their home and have enriched its character.

Germans and Italians

According to Nyberg and Steinbrueck, the Judkins neighborhood at the south end of the Central Area was the center of the German and Italian communities at the beginning of the 20th century.²¹⁰ In 1940, nearly half of all foreign-born Italians were concentrated in seven census tracts located south of Yesler Way and east of 12th Avenue.²¹¹

Jewish Community

²⁰⁸ Henry, "Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History,"

²⁰⁹ Mumford, p. 84

²¹⁰ Nyberg and Steinbrueck.

²¹¹ Schmid, p. 117.

Mary T. Henry has suggested that the Central Area was a predominantly Jewish neighborhood from 1890 until World War I.²¹² Other writers have observed that the presence of several synagogues in the Central Area is a reflection of the once significant Jewish population.²¹³

Although the first synagogue, Ohaveth Sholum, was founded in 1889 at 8th Avenue and Seneca Street on the western slope of First Hill, the second, Bikur Holim, was established to the southeast at 13th Avenue and Washington Street in 1891 and relocated to the Central Area at 17th Avenue South and Yesler Way in 1914.²¹⁴ The structure erected at that location, the Congregation Bikur Holim Synagogue (1912 –1915), was designed by B. Marcus Priteca. It was later converted into the Langston Hughes Cultural Arts Center.²¹⁵ It is now a designated Seattle Landmark.

Seattle’s largest synagogue, Temple De Hirsch, was established in 1899 and built a permanent home at 15th Avenue and East Pike Street in 1907.²¹⁶ A new Temple de Hirsch Sanctuary, designed by B. Marcus Priteca with Detlie & Peck, was built on the same block in 1960 at East Pike Street and 16th Avenue.²¹⁷ The earlier temple structure was demolished in 1992.²¹⁸

Walt Crowley has noted that

Though relatively small, Seattle’s Jewish community provided the growing town with important leaders such as banker and street railway financier Jacob Furth, mayor Bailey Gatzert, educator Nathan Eckstein, and social reformer Jesse Epstein. Beginning in 1903, the city also attracted a large number of Sephardim, including the first members of the influential Alhadeff family, and it now boasts the fourth largest Sephardic community in the United States. Antisemitism bloomed rather late in Seattle and was largely dispelled by the 1960s, thus preventing a forced concentration of Jews into any single neighborhood.²¹⁹

According to Mary T. Henry, the German Jews were hardware and grocery merchants who reached Seattle in the 1850s, settling eventually in the Central Area and on Capitol Hill. In her view, it was primarily this community that built the Temple De Hirsch Sinai

²¹² Henry, “Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History.”

²¹³ Nyberg and Steinbrueck.

²¹⁴ Crowley, *National Trust Guide: Seattle*, p. 143.

²¹⁵ Miriam Sutermeister, “B. Marcus Priteca,” in Jeffrey Karl Ochsner (ed.), *Shaping Seattle Architecture: A Historical Guide to the Architects* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), p. 183.

²¹⁶ Crowley, *National Trust Guide: Seattle*, p. 143.

²¹⁷ Woodbridge, p. 150.

²¹⁸ Crowley, *National Trust Guide: Seattle*, p. 144.

²¹⁹ Crowley, *National Trust Guide: Seattle*, p. 143.

and offered monetary and social assistance to the Jews from Poland and the Mediterranean who arrived later. She goes on to suggest that

The Polish Yiddish speaking Jews were the next wave of immigrants and they built kosher markets, Hebrew schools, and orthodox synagogues near and on Yesler Way. The last wave were the Spanish speaking Jews from Turkey and Rhodes. They added coffee shops and Mediterranean grocery stores to the area as well as their own orthodox synagogues.²²⁰

In the 1940s, a study of Seattle's foreign-born population indicated that there was a significant clustering of Russian immigrants in the area between Broadway and Lake Washington north of Yesler Way and noted that the Russians in this area were predominantly Jewish.²²¹

Scandinavian Community

The first Danish community was established in 1890.²²²

Washington Hall, completed in 1908, was built for Lodge #29 of the Danish Brotherhood and is located at the northwest corner of 14th Avenue and East Fir Street near the western edge of the Central Area. The structure was designed by Victor Vorhees and built by Hans Pederson. The building contained meeting rooms and a kitchen on the main floor, with a double height performance hall above. A boarding house, used mainly by recent Danish immigrants, was located at the west end of the structure.²²³

Washington Hall later became a favorite location for the activities of numerous local neighborhood groups, including African American, Jewish, and Chinese organizations, as well as various churches, political groups and labor unions. The building also became a popular dance hall and music venue and is said to have hosted performers ranging from Duke Ellington to Jimi Hendrix.²²⁴ The building is now a designated Seattle Landmark.

Another legacy of the Scandinavian presence is St. Johannes Dansk Evangelisk Lutherske Kirke at the northeast corner of 24th Avenue and East Spruce Street. In 1914, 40 Danes met at Washington Hall for the purpose of formally organizing the congregation. The church was dedicated in 1926. By 2001, the building housed the Eritrean Community Center and Church.²²⁵

²²⁰ Henry, "Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History."

²²¹ Schmid, p. 123.

²²² Henry, "Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History."

²²³ Otto Brask, "Washington Hall," *Nordic Heritage Museum Historical Journal*, v. 4, n. 2 (Summer/Fall 2008), pp. 55-57.

²²⁴ Brask, p. 59.

²²⁵ Henry, "Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History." In 2009, the address of the brick church building was 2400 Spruce Street and that of the attached wood frame community center building was 2402 Spruce Street; however, a visit to the

Japanese Community

By 1896, Seattle had regular steamship connections with Japan.²²⁶ This both increased the opportunity for trans-Pacific trade and facilitated Japanese immigration to the Puget Sound region.

The Japanese who came to Seattle in the late 1880s, settled in the International District. There was sharp growth in this population from 1890 until 1920, and eventually the Japanese community spread east into the Central Area.²²⁷ This movement east began about 1916 and continued until World War II.²²⁸

Most of these new Central Area residents settled in the vicinity of Yesler Way.²²⁹ They operated grocery stores, barbershops, gas stations, a dry cleaning shop, a beer parlor, and a shoe repair shop along Yesler.²³⁰

The community's single bank failed in the Depression and many people moved back to Japan or emigrated to California. The community extended from Yesler to Dearborn and from First to Sixteenth with a center at the area from 5th to 6th on Main and Jackson Streets.²³¹

By 1940, members of the Japanese and Japanese American communities were concentrated either side of Yesler between 5th Avenue and 23rd Avenue. The oldest part of the community, which was also its main business district, was located at the western end of this area.²³²

In the Spring of 1942, persons of Japanese descent living in Seattle were evacuated to concentration camps.

The blocks from 14th Avenue to 18th Avenues between Yesler Way and Jackson Street still retain a strong Japanese presence -- the Buddhist Church, Seattle Koyasan Church, Konko, Wisteria Park, Japanese Congregational Church, Keiro Nursing Home, and the Kawabe Memorial House are all located in this area.²³³

site has raised a question concerning the date when the brick structure was built; a cornerstone at the southwest corner of the church building bears the inscription "Spruce Street Seventh Day Adventist Church 1953."

²²⁶ Schmid, p. 8.

²²⁷ Henry, "Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History."

²²⁸ Nyberg and Steinbrueck.

²²⁹ Nyberg and Steinbrueck.

²³⁰ Henry, "Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History."

²³¹ Schmid, p. 135.

²³² Schmid, p. 135.

²³³ Henry, "Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History."

Japanese Language School at 1414 South Weller, a designated Seattle Landmark, is also a reminder of the area's Japanese heritage.

The Early African American Community and the Central Area

In 1890, the African American population of Seattle was only 286, less than 1% (0.67%) of the total population of 42,837. According to the 1890 Census, 97 of these individuals lived in the First Ward, 111 in the Second Ward, 53 in the Third Ward, and 25 in the Fourth Ward.

African Americans are known to have lived and owned property throughout the city in the territorial period. William Hedges, for example, owned a four acre tract on Broadway that he leased to two Chinese men for three years beginning in 1871 in exchange for their promise to clear the land, enclose it with a "substantial rail fence," and plant twenty fruit trees furnished by Hedges.²³⁴ In 1884, a black barber, W. A. Scott, left Seattle's core area and began living near the corner of Broadway and Yesler.²³⁵

However, the majority of Seattle's black population lived in what is now the downtown area during the territorial period, as did most of the city's other residents. Esther Mumford (writing in 1980) reported that "Until the Fire of 1889, most black people lived in the area of downtown Seattle encompassed by Jackson on the South, James on the North, Third Avenue on the east, and along First Avenue and First Avenue South on the west."²³⁶

The picture had apparently begun to change the following year. Calvin F. Schmid (writing in 1944) noted that by about 1890, most African Americans were living near the center of the city in the area from 5th Avenue to 14th Avenue. "The two Negro churches were located at 5th and Pike and 11th and Pike, respectively."²³⁷

"Because the holdings of the African Americans in the territorial period were so widely scattered over what became the city of Seattle, it is difficult to assess whether or not they met discrimination in their attempts to buy property." However, Mumford has noted that "where one [African American] bought property, within a short period of time, others bought in the same area." This tendency was apparent as early as the 1860s when William Hedges and M. F. Monet bought lots between Second Avenue West and Fourth Avenues West in an area bordered by Harrison Street and Republican Street (approximately where the International Fountain and Memorial Stadium are located at

²³⁴ Mumford, p. 28. Mumford cites "Deeds, Volume 6, 4 May 1871, p. 5."

²³⁵ Mumford, p. 110.

²³⁶ Mumford, p. 110.

²³⁷ Schmid, p. 137. Note that the intersection of 14th and Pike coincides roughly with the intersection of 14th and Madison, and that west of this point, Pike is north of Madison, suggesting that a significant portion of the African American community had moved north and east of the area identified by Mumford.

Seattle Center).²³⁸ It was repeated when Archy Fox bought a lot at Sixth and James, near where I-5 crosses James today, and William Grose made a similar purchase five months later on the same block.²³⁹

The pattern of African American settlement in the East Madison district also appears to be an example of this inclination.²⁴⁰ In fact, it has been suggested that the settlement of African Americans in the East Madison hill district was an historical accident related almost wholly to the decision of William Grose to buy property there.²⁴¹ According to Calvin Schmid, there is no particular reason to believe that African Americans would have migrated to this choice Madison area in the 1890s were it not for the position and influence of William Grose in the larger Seattle community.²⁴²

As was noted in the previous chapter, although William Grose bought property in East Madison in 1882, he was not the first African American to live in the area. A few black individuals had built homes there by 1889. However, the area remained very sparsely settled throughout the 1880s.

In fact, it was a long way from downtown to the vicinity of 20th and Madison in territorial days, and except for some parts of the property belonging to Henry Yesler, most of the area was heavily wooded and inhabited by bears.²⁴³ The East Madison area, consisting of large hill with a hollow to the east,²⁴⁴ remained largely undeveloped until the Madison Street Cable Car line was extended east to Lake Washington in 1890.²⁴⁵

When public transportation became available, the area began to attract more black professionals, business owners and skilled artisans,²⁴⁶ who found the area to be not unlike white streetcar suburbs such as Rainier Heights or Madison Park.²⁴⁷ The removal of Mr. Grose and his family to the hill after the Seattle Fire in 1889 may have quickened the pace of black migration to the area.²⁴⁸

Some of the new homeseekers purchased lots from Mr. Grose and, following his death, from his son, George. These new property owners constructed house on the farmstead of Seattle's oldest black family.²⁴⁹

²³⁸ Mumford, p. 108. Mumford cites Volume 3, Deeds, p. 131, October 26, 1869.

²³⁹ Mumford, p. 108. Mumford cites Volume 4, Deeds, p. 276, May 28, 1870, and p. 493, October 1, 1870.

²⁴⁰ Mumford, p. 108.

²⁴¹ Schmid, p. 140.

²⁴² Schmid, p. 140.

²⁴³ Mumford, p. 112.

²⁴⁴ Schmid, p. 137.

²⁴⁵ Taylor, p. 25.

²⁴⁶ Taylor, p. 35; Taylor cites Dixon collection, *Seattle P-I*, and Schmid.

²⁴⁷ Taylor, p. 25.

²⁴⁸ Schmid, p. 140.

²⁴⁹ Taylor, p. 35; Taylor cites Dixon collection, *Seattle P-I*, and Schmid.

Some sources report that there was much opposition to this migration on the part of the existing white residents of the Madison area.²⁵⁰ However, it appears the area quickly became the home of Seattle's most important and stable black community.²⁵¹ White property owners decided to sell, but not to rent, to the newcomers. Most of the incoming African Americans moved to the top of the hill, but a few bought land and built homes in the hollow to the east.²⁵²

After 1889 black people lived along Madison as far West as 10th Avenue, and as far East as 30th Avenue. From the early 1890s they were sprinkled throughout the area from Columbia on the South to Denny on the North.²⁵³

Not all black families sought homes in the East Madison district. By 1894 the Robert S. Brown family was living on 26th Avenue East, south of Lee Street near where Interlaken enters the Arboretum. In 1901 Henry Gregg and his wife lived at 24th Avenue East and Aloha Street three blocks east of Holy Names Academy. About five families lived in the vicinity of 26th and Dearborn a few blocks east of present Washington Middle School playground, from 1891. After the Fire the Freeman family lived at 12th and Yesler.²⁵⁴ By the turn of the century, a small group of black individuals had purchased property and built homes in the Green Lake area.²⁵⁵

The members of Seattle's small black community appear to have been able to purchase property throughout the town, and there is evidence that some blacks found homes in integrated apartment houses and in neighborhoods that were predominantly white. However, a letter written by Bonita Riley Wright to Hazel Dixon in 1936 indicates that the options for black homeseekers were more limited. Regarding African American settlement in the East Madison area she wrote:

. . . during the nineties the only place colored people could live was what was known as Coon Hollow, a swamp and a mudhole but in thirty years, regardless of handicaps and low wages, they had advanced to what we know now is the most desirable close-in residential district.

Mrs. Wright was speaking from first-hand experience, and for this reason her views on the matter cannot easily be dismissed.²⁵⁶

The East Madison District in the 1890s

²⁵⁰ Schmid, p. 140.

²⁵¹ Nyberg and Steinbrueck.

²⁵² Schmid, p. 140.

²⁵³ Mumford, p. 108.

²⁵⁴ Mumford, p. 108.

²⁵⁵ Mumford, p. 109.

²⁵⁶ Mumford, p. 111.

According to Esther Mumford, Elizabeth Oxendine (who arrived in Seattle in 1889) remembered the East Madison district in 1892 as an area of unpaved streets winding through fallen trees, stumps and underbrush. Ms. Oxendine also recalled that there were no streetlights, and when people went to church at night, they had to carry lanterns.²⁵⁷

Most people living in the area did not have luxuries, but they enjoyed what was considered a comfortable life at the time. “The growing number of black homeowners in the Madison district in the early 1890s gave testimony to their industry and thrift, as did their real estate acquisitions throughout the Victorian period.”²⁵⁸

African Americans took whatever work they could find. Most often their jobs involved manual labor. They would work in mills such as that operated by Stimson and Company, or in David Denny’s mill on Lake Union. A few also worked in logging operations.²⁵⁹

East Madison After 1900

The East Madison community was neither the earliest area of black settlement in Seattle, nor was it initially the most populous. However, Quintard Taylor has suggested that “by 1900, East Madison had the largest concentration of black homeowners in the city and represented the aspirations of a nascent African American middle class.”²⁶⁰

Most African American homeowners at the time lived within three or four blocks of Madison. However, it was rarely the case that black families (or individuals) owned adjacent properties, and white people always outnumbered the African Americans, even when the area was sparsely settled. The district could not be described as a black colony except in the sense that the African Americans who chose to reside there and were oriented towards Madison Street for their religious and social life, as well as for transportation.²⁶¹

Businesses owned and operated by African Americans flourished along East Madison during the early 1900s. These included barber shops and restaurants, a fuel yard, a drug store, a hotel, and a theater.²⁶²

In 1911, an apartment building called the Douglas, at 114 24th Avenue North, was sold to a group of African American real estate men, bringing more black residents to the East Madison community. This was followed by the purchase of a number of private dwellings on 24th Avenue by African Americans. Between 1920 and 1923 several apartment houses, including The Chandler (2416 East Madison) and The Adelphi (230-

²⁵⁷ Taylor, p. 35; Taylor cites Dixon collection, the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, and Schmid.

²⁵⁸ Mumford, p. 38.

²⁵⁹ Mumford, p. 39.

²⁶⁰ Taylor, p. 25.

²⁶¹ Mumford, p. 108.

²⁶² Henry, “Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History.”

232 23rd Avenue North), were sold to black men.²⁶³

The churches followed their communicants on their eastward migration. As noted earlier, the First African Methodist Episcopal Church established itself near 14th and Madison in 1890. Mt. Zion Baptist Church, organized in May 1890, initially met at the Young Naturalists' Hall on the old University Campus (where the Cobb Building now stands downtown),²⁶⁴ but later bought a lot in the center of the Madison community at 19th Avenue and Madison Street.²⁶⁵ Cultural organizations were also established in and near the East Madison district.²⁶⁶

As the East Madison district became more developed, African Americans began moving into other Central Area neighborhoods, most notably those along 23rd Avenue in the vicinity of Jackson Street and Cherry Street.²⁶⁷

²⁶³ Schmid, p. 140. The apartment house addresses are from Polk's Seattle City Directory for 1912 (p. 430), 1924 (p. 429), and 1924 (p. 246).

²⁶⁴ Mumford, p. 158.

²⁶⁵ Schmid, p. 140.

²⁶⁶ Henry, "Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History."

²⁶⁷ Nyberg and Steinbrueck.

Between the Wars 1918 – 1940

New Public Schools Built Between the Wars

James A. Garfield High School

East High School, the Central Area's first public high school, opened in temporary quarters on a portion of the present Garfield campus in 1920 with 282 freshmen. In 1922, the site was expanded to 4.42 acres. By the 1922-23 academic year, 900 students were being educated at the site in 27 temporary buildings.²⁶⁸

A permanent building was designed for the site by architect Floyd A. Naramore. The new school, James A. Garfield High School, opened in September 1923 and initially served over 1,000 students. A south wing, also designed by Naramore, was added in 1929. Enrollment reached an all time high of 2,300 students in 1939.²⁶⁹

Bailey Gatzert School

The original Bailey Gatzert School opened in December 1921 at 615 12th Avenue South (the southwest corner of Weller Street and 12th Avenue).²⁷⁰ Although located a few blocks west of the Central Area, the school served portions of the Central Area community. During the 1920s and 1930s, the students who attended Gatzert were primarily from Chinatown and Nipponmachi (Japan Town). Just before World War II, the Yesler Terrace Housing Project began contributing to the ethnic diversity of the school.²⁷¹

Adjustments at Older Public Schools Between the Wars

Washington School

Enrollment at the Washington School, located at 18th Avenue South and Main Street, averaged between 600 and 800 students, peaking at 890 during the 1931-32 school year. Principal Arthur G. Sears came to the school in 1928 because he wanted to ensure that Seattle's immigrant children received a good education. At Washington, nearly half the students were Japanese American. In the following years, large numbers of recently arrived European Jews, as well as Chinese and Filipinos students, began attending.²⁷²

The Washington School operated as an elementary school until 1938 when it began

²⁶⁸ Thompson and Marr, p. 101.

²⁶⁹ Thompson and Marr, pp. 101-102.

²⁷⁰ Thompson and Marr, p. 109.

²⁷¹ Thompson and Marr, p. 109.

²⁷² Thompson and Marr, p. 301.

serving only intermediate level students.

Madrona School

In 1931, a kindergarten was opened at the Madrona School, and enrollment reached 683.²⁷³

Colman School, Rainier School and T. T. Minor School

In 1934-35, enrollment at the Colman School dipped under 400. In September 1939, when it became a K-6 school, enrollment dropped to 230.²⁷⁴ The decline was only halted in 1940 when an auditorium-gymnasium was added at the southeast corner of the Colman School. This allowed the District to close Rainier School, whose 200 students moved to Colman.²⁷⁵

Although the original Rainier School, built in 1891, and the original T. T. Minor School, built in 1890, were apparently reaching the ends of their useful lives in the late 1930s, the two programs met different fates. The Rainier School was closed and demolished, but as the T. T. Minor School approached its 50th year of operation, the decision was made to replace the building with a new modern structure. A special levy passed in 1939 -- during the Depression -- provided funds for replacing and adding space to T. T. Minor, as well as several other schools. The walls of the new building rose around the original structure, and as the new building neared completion in 1940, the old school house was closed and demolished. The program for deaf students was divided and moved to Summit, Longfellow, and Marshall.²⁷⁶

Harrison School

In 1918, the Harrison School PTA petitioned the school board to complete the additions planned when the structure was initially built so children above fifth grade would not have to complete their primary education at other schools, such as McGilvra and Longfellow (now called Meany). The community around Harrison was growing as the result of an influx of shipyard and other industrial workers during and immediately following World War I. Harrison expanded in the 1920s to serve grades one through six after portable were moved in.²⁷⁷

During the early years of the Depression, there was a decline in industrial employment and population, and eventually enrollment at Harrison decreased to the point where the cost per pupil became prohibitive. In July 1932, the School Board closed Harrison, except for a single room housing first graders. The other children who had been attending

²⁷³ Thompson and Marr, p. 190.

²⁷⁴ Thompson and Marr, p. 205.

²⁷⁵ Thompson and Marr, pp. 205-206.

²⁷⁶ Thompson and Marr, pp. 220-221.

²⁷⁷ Thompson and Marr, p. 156.

Harrison were assigned to Longfellow or Madrona. The Harrison building was closed completely one month into the 1934 school years due to insufficient enrollment. However, members of the surrounding neighborhood besieged the School Board with requests to reopen the school, and two rooms for grades 1-3 were reopened two years later.²⁷⁸

Institutionalized Racism and Segregation

Although racism and racial segregation have been a feature of American society from its inception, and although Seattle and the Pacific Northwest have not been particularly exceptional in this regard, the years between the two world wars was the period in Seattle's history during which racism was most fully institutionalized.

Roger Sale has noted that

In its earliest days the city and the territory were strongly antislave and antiblack – Free Soil meant, out here, freedom from both slave and slave owner – so blacks as a group had never been welcome on the northwest frontier. Many of the blacks who came in the nineteenth century were imported as strikebreakers during labor disputes . . . associated with the Knights of Labor and the anti-Chinese movement. The number of blacks remained small, however, until World War II. There were skirmishes before then, within the Garfield High School area especially, about blacks on athletic teams, or at dances or parties, but the number of blacks was small enough that they had to take what they were given and the whites could feel generous in giving it to them.²⁷⁹

Institutionalized racism took many forms, but one way in which it affected the character of the Central Area was through the framing of the legal documents used in the buying and selling of property. Real estate developers often employed discriminatory language in these documents in the form of “real covenants” (i.e, legal obligations imposed in a deed by the seller upon the buyer of real estate) designed to prevent non-white persons from buying property in particular developments. Buyers had to agree to the language if they wanted to buy property. Subsequent buyers also had to agree to the discriminatory covenants, although they sometimes were unaware of them because deeds often referred to the covenants without specifying them. By the late 1940s, the majority of residential properties in Seattle were restricted by racial covenants.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁸ Thompson and Marr, p. 156.

²⁷⁹ Roger Sale, *Seattle, Past to Present* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1982), p. 217.

²⁸⁰ David Wilma, “Seattle Civic Unity Committee denounces restrictive covenants that discriminate against African Americans, Jews, and Asians in February 1948.” *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History*; (Essay 3153, March 30, 2001, accessed February 7, 2009).

It may have been concern among some whites about expansion of the African American East Madison community that led to the formulation of one such covenant used on Capitol Hill in 1927, which said “The parties... agree each with the others that no part of the lands owned by them shall ever be used or occupied by or sold, conveyed, leased, rented or given to Negroes or any person of Negro blood.” However, African Americans were not the only people targeted. Another covenant, used in Broadmore in 1928, stipulated that “No part of said property hereby conveyed shall ever be used or occupied by any Hebrew or by any person of the Ethiopian, Malay or any Asiatic race . . .”²⁸¹

For the most part, the Central Area remained free of these restrictions, perhaps because the district was already home to a significant proportion of Seattle’s African American community. However, in the first half of the twentieth century, these discriminatory covenants caused the minority component of the Central Area’s population to increase, albeit initially at a very slow pace, and set the stage for rapid demographic changes in the neighborhood during and after World War II.

²⁸¹ Wilma, “Seattle Civic Unity Committee denounces restrictive covenants that discriminate against African Americans, Jews, and Asians in February 1948.”

The Years of Transition: 1940 – 1960

Transition to Intermediate School Programs at Washington and Meany

The programs at two schools serving the Cental Area were significantly altered between 1940 and 1960 in accordance with a general movement toward the introduction of intermaediate schools throughout the Seattle School Disrict.

Washington 7th and 8th Grade Center

In September 1938, the Washington School, which had operated as an elementary school for many years, was reconfigured to serve 7th and 8th graders. The school became known as Washington 7th and 8th Grade Center and had an enrollment of 706. When 9th graders were added in the 1946-47 school year, the school became George Washington Junior High School.²⁸²

The school continued in operation through the 1950s. However, plans for building a new junior high school on a large tract south of Jackson Street and west of 23rd Avenue South were announced in December 1958, and when the new facility opened in 1963, Washington Junior High School moved to the new site and the old building was adapted for other uses.²⁸³

Meany 7th and 8th Grade Center

In 1941, the Longfellow School also became a 7th and 8th grade center and the school's name was changed to Edmond S. Meany. The students in the first six grades were sent to neighboring schools, and the 7th and 8th graders from Lowell, Minor, Montlake, Stevens and Summit began attending the center. The next year Madrona also sent its 7th and 8th grade students. The main building at Meany was remodeled and a wing was added to accommodate the increased enrollment.²⁸⁴

In 1945, an auditorium-gymnasium and two home economics classrooms were added. The following year 9th graders began attending the school and its name was changed to Edmond S. Meany Junior High. The building's 34 classrooms, augmented by two portables, served a student population of 787. In 1955, a large 'sawtooth' addition containing a library, and science, art, music and industrial training rooms opened on the north side of the property and enrollment exceeded 1,000 students.²⁸⁵

²⁸² Thompson and Marr, p. 302.

²⁸³ Thompson and Marr, p. 302.

²⁸⁴ Thompson and Marr, p. 214.

²⁸⁵ Thompson and Marr, p. 215.

James A. Garfield High School

Beginning in 1955, all ninth graders were educated at junior high schools and the enrollment dropped from 1500 to 1250.

The Elementary Schools 1940 - 1960

Colman School

The addition of an auditorium-gymnasium at the Colman School in 1940 began a period of program expansion at the site. During World War II, the Stadium Federal Housing Project was constructed in the Colman School neighborhood, and five temporary classrooms were added in the summer of 1943 when the school's population rose to 550.²⁸⁶

In order to expand the school's play area, property to the east of Colman was purchased in 1944, 1945, and 1948, and the City vacated 24th Avenue South to allowing a direct connection between the school and the new property. As a result of these acquisitions, the school's site expanded to 6.2 acres.²⁸⁷

T.T. Minor School

As students completed the 1940 -1941 academic year at T. T. Minor, the building that had housed the school for fifty years was slowly being enveloped by its replacement. The new structure, designed by Naramore & Brady, opened September 4, 1941.²⁸⁸ Its ten classrooms, kindergarten room, large assembly-lunchroom, and covered playcourts were built to serve 420 pupils.²⁸⁹

Newspaper articles at the time described the building as "streamlined,"²⁹⁰ although this Depression era project would more accurately be described as an early local example of the International Style. The facades of the single story concrete and wood frame structure are organized in a Modern composition utilizing exposed concrete surfaces, brick veneer, decorative stone, and cedar siding.

It was the first school building of its kind to be constructed in Seattle and was considered a model for the future. The press reported that over 700 students from neighboring districts had wanted to attend T. T. Minor but had been turned away. Principal R. J. Knutson, is said to have remarked that "Our school is just too attractive."²⁹¹

²⁸⁶ Thompson and Marr, pp. 205, 206

²⁸⁷ Thompson and Marr, pp. 205, 206

²⁸⁸ Thompson and Marr, p. 221.

²⁸⁹ Thompson and Marr, p. 221.

²⁹⁰ Thompson and Marr, p. 221.

²⁹¹ Thompson and Marr, p. 221.

In the 1940s, T. T. Minor and at least two other schools were opened for evening classes. Minor was used for teaching English and citizenship to the foreign born.²⁹²

The building was enlarged in 1960 with an addition designed by Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johanson. The site was expanded to 3.5 acres the following year.²⁹³

Leschi Elementary School

When Washington School began operating solely as an intermediate school in 1938, Leschi became a K-6 program and enrollment dropped. However, the closing of Rainier School caused Leschi's service area to be extended to the west (to 19th Avenue), encompassing a multiethnic neighborhood. In 1940-41, enrollment rebounded to 374. Soon, portables appeared on the school grounds, including one used as a lunchroom and as many as six used for classrooms. By 1954, Leschi served 509 students who were being taught by 15 teachers; the kindergarten operated on triple shifts.²⁹⁴

The playfield was "blacktopped" during the 1950s and the school's site was expanded to the south along 32nd Avenue. Enrollment peaked at 592 in 1958-59. A house left standing on the property added to the site was used as an annex from 1958 to 1960.²⁹⁵

Madrona School

Madrona's 7th and 8th graders left to attend Edmond Meany Junior High School in September 1942, and enrollment at Madrona fell to 576. The shop was modified to serve as a play area and the domestic science room became a classroom.²⁹⁶

Harrison School

When, in 1954, a group from the Harrison community approached the school board requesting that the Harrison School's attendance area be expanded to maintain a good racial balance at the school, they were told by the Superintendent that the Harrison building has been reopened and extended only as a mean of avoiding overcrowding and portable construction at Madrona and McGlilvra, and that the grounds and facilities at Harrison were not suitable for further expansion. In spite of this statement, the physical plant was enlarged in 1958. The additions included eight classrooms, a gymnasium, a playcourt, and a lunchroom-auditorium. The new construction extended the front of the building outward to run the full length of 32nd Avenue between Harrison and Republican. The school's service area was extended to include students living north of Madison Street.²⁹⁷

²⁹² Thompson and Marr, p. 221.

²⁹³ Thompson and Marr, p. 221.

²⁹⁴ Thompson and Marr, pp. 175-176.

²⁹⁵ Thompson and Marr, p. 176.

²⁹⁶ Thompson and Marr, p. 190.

²⁹⁷ Thompson and Marr, p. 157

Bailey Gatzert School

The old Bailey Gatzert School, opened in 1921, lost about 45 percent of its student body when Japanese Americans were interned during World War II. However, enrollment at the school appears to have rebounded after the war. Nine portable classrooms were added between 1945 and 1950. In the late 1940s, 10 percent of the student population was Chinese American, 20 percent African American, 5 percent Filipino American, 27 percent Japanese American, 35 percent white, and 3 percent Native American. In 1953, land across Weller Street was acquired for a playground.²⁹⁸

Seattle's Population in 1940

In 1940, the population of Seattle reached 368,302. Of this number, 294,489 were native born whites, 59,612 were foreign born whites, 6,975 were Japanese (native and foreign born), 3,789 were African Americans (native and foreign born), 1,781 were Chinese (native and foreign born), 1,392 were Filipinos (native and foreign born), 222 were Native Americans, 9 were from the Indian subcontinent (native and foreign born), and 33 were unclassified. The area of the city was 71.47 square miles and Seattle's citizens drove 125,000 automobiles.²⁹⁹

1940 Census Figures for Tracts Representing the Central Area³⁰⁰

Census Tract	White	Black	Other	Dwelling Units
K-2 (76)	3,789	284	34	1,472
J-1 (77)	2,547	771	39	1,121
K-3 (79)	4,389	129	50	1,611
K-5 (87)	3,729	610	710	1,336
J-3 (88)	4,512	92	98	1,343
Q-1 (89)	4,455	175	236	1,480
P-1 (90)	1,757	416	1,623	1,106

²⁹⁸ Thompson and Marr, p. 109.

²⁹⁹ Schmid, p. 99; the figure for the Japanese component is adjusted by one and matches the figure offered by Taylor, p. 245.

³⁰⁰ United States Census, 1940.

The Central Area Becomes a Majority African American Neighborhood

In 1940, 2,477 African Americans (about 65% of all black Seattleites) lived in seven contiguous census tracts in central Seattle. Four of these tracts, including J-1 (now Tract 77), K-3 (79), K-5 (87), and J-3 (88), cover the area typically considered to be the core of the Central Area. Two of them, Q-1 (89) and P-1 (90), include the areas south of Yesler Way between 23rd Avenue and Lake Washington, and between 12th Avenue and 23rd Avenue, respectively. The seventh tract covers the southern end of the Miller Park neighborhood north of Madison, typically considered a part of the Capitol Hill neighborhood but encompassing a small part of the East Madison community as well.

Calvin Schmid has indicated that most of these African Americans were living in one of four distinct areas.³⁰¹

African Americans in the East Madison Community

The largest and most important of these distinct areas was the East Madison community, centered on a small business district stretching from 21st Avenue to 23rd Avenue on Madison Street. In 1940, this area was regarded as the most desirable neighborhood for black Seattleites. Most of the business and professional leaders of the African American community owned homes in or near this part of the city.³⁰²

The East Madison community corresponds fairly well with King County census tracts 76, 77, and 79. In 1940, 1,184 African Americans were living in these three census tracts.³⁰³ This is 31% of Seattle's total black population of 3,789.

According to Schmid, there were a slightly smaller number (1,085 African Americans) in the East Madison Community in 1940.³⁰⁴ Despite this apparent concentration, few blocks in the area were occupied solely by people of one race.³⁰⁵ The total population of the three tracts was 12,032.³⁰⁶

Schmid reports that the value of property at Madison and 23rd was declining in the 1940s and that the African American community there was tending to expand to the north and west. The streets north of Madison were still regarded as desirable residential streets; however, African American movement in that direction was limited because of covenants attached to the deeds of the white residents north of Thomas Street restricted sale or rental of property in the area to African Americans. There were two black families living

³⁰¹ Schmid, p. 137. See also "Negro Population Seattle: 1920 and 1940" (Chart 48) in Schmid, p. 138.

³⁰² Schmid, p. 137.

³⁰³ United States Census, 1940.

³⁰⁴ Schmid, p. 137.

³⁰⁵ Schmid, p. 140.

³⁰⁶ United States Census, 1940.

north of Thomas Street in the the 1940s, but they apparently moved into that area before the covenants came into general use.³⁰⁷

During the early years of the Great Depression the African Americans living in the East Madison community could be characterized as conservative, middle class, bourgeois, and anxious to preserve non-militant relations with Seattle's white majority. Until the precipitous decline in trans-Pacific shipping that began in 1937, the black component of the Madison community was largely a home-owning group supported by the incomes of well-paid cooks and stewards.³⁰⁸

Jackson Street Area

Jackson Street stretches east from Elliott Bay through Pioneer Square, the International District and the Central Area. It enters the Central Area somewhere between 12th Avenue South and 15th Avenue South and extends to the eastern edge of the Central Area at 31st Avenue South (the western boundary of Frink Park).

In 1940, the African American component of the Jackson Street community was mainly concentrated between Broadway and 15th Avenue with smaller concentrations to the west.³⁰⁹ Significant fractions of the Jackson Street community were located west of the Central Area in what is now Pioneer Square and the International District.

Beginning in 1940, the portion of the Jackson Street community extending into the Central Area (i.e., east of 12th Avenue South and west of 23rd Avenue South) was included in Census Tract P-1 (now Tract 90). Tract P-1 was home to 3,796 people, including 1,757 whites, 416 blacks, and 1,623 persons of other races. African Americans made up about 11% of the tract's population.³¹⁰

Some residents of East Madison neighborhood used the expression "cross-town" when referring to the Jackson Street community. Schmid reports that at the end of the period between the wars, Jackson Street was an area in transition characterized by low land values and poor housing.³¹¹

Although Schmid does not carefully define the extent of the Jackson Street community, he indicates that, in 1940 the Jackson Street area contained 1,168 people, of whom 276 were African American, 96 white, and 796 of other races consisting mostly of Chinese, Filipinos, and Japanese. The Japanese component of the population was greatly reduced when persons of Japanese descent were evacuated to concentration camps in 1942.³¹²

³⁰⁷ Schmid, p. 140.

³⁰⁸ Schmid, p. 140

³⁰⁹ See "Negro Population Seattle: 1920 and 1940" (Chart 48) in Schmid, p. 138.

³¹⁰ United States Census, 1940

³¹¹ Schmid, p. 140.

³¹² Schmid, pp. 140-141.

According to Schmid, the African Americans living in the Jackson Street community fell generally into one of three groups. The first of these included railroad pullmen and postal workers who would “lay over” between runs at one of the two hotels in the area catering to blacks. A second group included African Americans working “cross-town” in the service or entertainment industries concentrated in that area. The last group included those who lived in the area to take advantage of low rents or because they wished to be near their places of employment.³¹³

The 26th Avenue Community

Some distance to the east and a little to the south of the Jackson Street community, a smaller group of African Americans were concentrated in an area Schmid calls the 26th Avenue community.³¹⁴

This community was included in Census Tract Q-1 (now Tract 89), situated south of Yesler Way and extending from 23rd Avenue South on the west to Lake Washington on the east. In 1940, this tract was home to 4,866 people including 4,455 whites, 175 blacks, and 236 persons of other races. African Americans made up less than 4% of the tract’s population.

Housing and sanitation in the 26th Avenue community were somewhat superior to housing and sanitation in the Jackson Street area, and the 26th Avenue community was a community of low income families. Schmid’s suggestion that there were more than 200 African Americans living in this neighborhood appears to be an overestimate; however his statement that the African Americans families were living among whites and persons of other races seems reasonable given the census data.³¹⁵

The Cherry Street Community

The African American members of the Cherry Street community lived a few blocks either side of Cherry Street between 15th Avenue and 23rd Avenue.³¹⁶

The Cherry Street community was situated entirely within Census Tract K-5 (now Tract 87). In 1940, this tract was home to 3,729 whites, 610 blacks, and 710 persons of other races.³¹⁷

According to Schmid, this area once had the status of an isolated and exclusive district for African Americans, but with the growth of the East Madison community and the Jackson Street area it tended to become a mid-place between the two. The most respectable black families from the Jackson Street area and the poorer families from East

³¹³ Schmid, p. 141.

³¹⁴ See “Negro Population Seattle: 1920 and 1940” (Chart 48) in Schmid, p. 138.

³¹⁵ Schmid, p. 141.

³¹⁶ See “Negro Population Seattle: 1920 and 1940” (Chart 48) in Schmid, p. 138.

³¹⁷ United States Census, 1940.

Madison migrated to this district. The majority of the homes were second class, according to Schmid, and the sanitation was poor. Many of the residences in this area were overcrowded. Schmid has suggested that there were approximately two hundred and sixty African Americans in this 'intermediate' community,³¹⁸ though this appears to be a low estimate.

Yesler-Jackson and East Madison symbolized two distinct black Seattles, each generating an image held by most black residents well into the twentieth century: Yesler-Jackson, the larger of the two, was impoverished and squalid, and yet risqué, while East Madison was quickly evolving into a bastion of middle-class decorum and conformity. These two neighborhoods slowly expanded toward each other, and by World War II would become, spatially at least, a single African American community: the Central District.³¹⁹

Concentration of African Americans in the Central Area After World War II

According to United States Census figures, the African American population of Seattle increased dramatically from 3,789 in 1940 to 15,666 in 1950, and then to 26,901 in 1960. However, this growth was not uniformly spread across the city.

In 1940, 2,477 of the 3,789 African Americans residing in Seattle (i.e., 65.37% of Seattle's black population) were living in the seven census tracts discussed above. However, the black population of the Central Area represented only 8.14% (2,477 of 30,445) of the neighborhood's total population.

By 1950, 7,837 of the 15,666 African Americans residing in Seattle (i.e., 50.03% of Seattle's black population – a decrease) were living in the seven tracts even though the African American component of the population in the seven tracts had increased to 25.70% of the total (7,837 of 30,494 individuals).

By 1960, 16,797 of the 26,901 African Americans residing in Seattle (i.e., 62.44% of Seattle's black population) were living in the seven tracts. These African Americans made up not only the majority of the city's black residents, but also, for the first time, the majority of the population of the seven tracts (16,797 of 30,421 or 55.22% of the area's total population).

This concentration was, in part, the result of the discriminatory covenants that had become common in the decades prior to World War II. In February 1948, the Seattle Civic Unity Committee denounced restrictive covenants designed to deny housing to minorities, principally African Americans. These restrictions effectively confined African Americans to the Central Area and a corridor along South Jackson Street, and prevented them from moving to neighborhoods such as Mount Baker, Capitol Hill and Broadmoor.

³¹⁸ Schmid, p. 141.

³¹⁹ Taylor, p. 35

The committee presented several examples of how Seattle realtors discriminated against minorities. Among these were the Capitola Hill covenants developed in 1927 and the Broadmoor covenants written in 1928 (both mentioned in the previous chapter). Other examples cited by the committee had appeared in Queen Anne, Laurelhurst, Victory Heights, Green Lake, and a number of other areas.³²⁰

In 1948, the Supreme Court held that restrictive covenants were illegal and that the government could not help to enforce them (*Shelley v. Kraemer*). However, this did not prevent property owners from voluntarily complying with the agreements when it came time to sell, a practice that allowed housing discrimination to continue.³²¹

In fact, until 1950, Article 34 of the Code of Ethics for realtors in Seattle included the statement that “A Realtor should never be instrumental in introducing into a neighborhood a character of property or occupancy, members of any race or nationality, or any individual whose presence will clearly be detrimental to property values in that neighborhood.”³²²

The total population of the seven tracts representing the Central Area remained relatively constant in the period from 1940 to 1960 at about 30,450. As the African American community increased in size, members of some other ethnic groups moved out. Mary T. Henry has reported that the Central Area’s Jewish population began to move to Seward Park and to the Eastside, leaving their synagogues to black Christians and to city institutions, and that the Japanese and European American populations in the area decreased as well.³²³ The number of middle class residents fell, and the aging housing stock was left to low-income minorities and elderly citizens. Housing blight, exploitation and disinvestment (“redlining”) led to a worsening of environmental conditions and exacerbated social problems.³²⁴

The First African Methodist Episcopal Church in the Period of Transition

The large influx of black people during World War II and in the post war years increased the membership of the First African Methodist Episcopal Church, rendering the existing facility incapable of accommodating the congregation. As a result, in 1955, under the leadership of Reverend C. D. Toliver, a \$100,000 remodeling and construction program was begun at the church. Benjamin F. McAdoo (1920-1981), a prominent African American architect and politician, was engaged to design an enlarged sanctuary and a

³²⁰ Wilma, “Seattle Civic Unity Committee denounces restrictive covenants that discriminate against African Americans, Jews, and Asians in February 1948.”

³²¹ Wilma, “Seattle Civic Unity Committee denounces restrictive covenants that discriminate against African Americans, Jews, and Asians in February 1948.”

³²² Wilma, “Seattle Civic Unity Committee denounces restrictive covenants that discriminate against African Americans, Jews, and Asians in February 1948.”

³²³ Henry, “Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History,”

³²⁴ Nyberg and Steinbrueck.

new wing for religious education.³²⁵

James A. Garfield High School

Garfield High School has been associated with ethnic and racial diversity for much of its history. In 1938, the school annual, called *The Arrow*, described the school as “a thriving community comprised of many races which are bound together by the staunchness of the Bulldog tradition.” In 1946, the *Christian Science Monitor* featured Garfield in one of its articles, referring to it as a school of many races but no race conflicts. The 1945 annual emphasized contributions made by various organizations at the school, including the Cathay Club, which staged Chinese plays, a group of Japanese-American pupils that performed traditional dances, and by a number of African American musicians.³²⁶

³²⁵ Henry, “First African Methodist Episcopal Church (Seattle).”

³²⁶ Thompson and Marr, pp. 102-103.

Period of Turmoil 1960 – 1980

Because of the large changes to the ethnic and character of the Central Area during the 1940s and 1950s, the citizens of Seattle were forced to address social and racial divisions (and the associated inequities) that the majority of Seattleites had been able to ignore for a century. This process led initially to social disruption and turmoil, but eventually to a number of profound political, physical and institutional changes throughout the city, and particularly in the Central Area.

The number of African Americans in Seattle remained a very small portion of the total population through the Depression years. However, this changed dramatically during and after the Second World War. Seattle's black population grew from 3, 789 to 15,666 between 1940 and 1950, a 315% increase, and expanded by 72% -- from 15,666 to 26,901 -- between 1950 and 1960. Still, in 1960, African Americans made up only 4.8% of Seattle's total population, though, as noted in the previous chapter, over 55% of Seattle residents living in the seven census tracts representing the Central Area were black.

A ghetto had begun to form in the Central Area,

. . . recognized as such by both blacks and real estate agents. Three-fourths of the blacks in 1960 lived in nine of the city's 121 census tracts, half within four of these, and most of the elementary schools within what was called the Central Area were more than 90 percent black.³²⁷

The Central Area was nearly surrounded by neighborhoods much less welcoming to African Americans. To the west was First Hill, which in earlier days had been a popular residential area for Seattle's leading families because of its proximity to downtown. By 1960, it was rapidly becoming a district comprised primarily of hospitals and other large institutions interspersed with a number of upscale apartment buildings. To the north was Capitol Hill, which (according to Roger Sale) “. . . changed from solid bourgeois Catholic to elegant and lavish as one went north on it.”³²⁸ To the east, on the ridges and hillsides overlooking Lake Washington, were Washington Park, Denny Blaine, Madrona, Leschi, and the northern end of Mount Baker. Covenants and, to a lesser extent, housing prices restricted the movement of African Americans seeking homes into the neighborhoods to the north and east of the Central Area.

Only to the south, in the Rainier Valley and on Beacon Hill, could the ghetto easily expand “without running into full-scale opposition.”³²⁹

The Central Area was one of the oldest residential areas of the city, and its middle class and working class houses were beginning to show their age. According to Roger Sale, the

³²⁷ Sale, p. 218.

³²⁸ Sale, p. 218.

³²⁹ Sale, p. 218.

neighborhood “consisted of streets of houses ranging from the plain and bulky to the plain and shacklike [sic].”³³⁰ According to Sale,

. . . the fact that there weren’t ten blocks in the ghetto that looked and acted like a slum seemed to blind all but the most committed whites to the pockets of deterioration, blight, and neglect that were everywhere. That one could find, on a street of abandoned or overcrowded houses, one that its brave and determined owner kept bright with paint or garden fostered the notion that all ‘those people’ needed was a little more will and self-respect.³³¹

The neighborhood’s situation was made more tenuous by the fact that African Americans residents were often the last hired and first fired by Seattle’s employers.

As the built environment began to show signs of deterioration, and as the minority component of the Central Area’s population increased, “redlining,” the practice of denying or increasing the cost of banking and insurance services to people in a specific area, began to cause property values to fall.

Physical Improvements at Central Area Public Schools

The public schools serving the Central Area were also ageing, but the School District made improvements to several of its buildings at the beginning of the 1960s.

The Elementary Schools: Minor, Leschi and Madrona

In 1957, Principal Thomas Leist of T. T. Minor School reported to the school board on the crowded conditions at his school, where enrollment had increased from 294 in 1945 to 737 in October 1956. In fall 1960, an addition to the school building consisting of several classrooms and a gymnasium was completed. The following year the district purchased the half-block west of the school to make adequate playground space available.³³²

During the 1960-61 school year, a much-needed addition was constructed at Leschi Elementary as well, adding seven classrooms, an administrative-health unit, a lunchroom-auditorium, a gymnasium, and covered playcourt on the south side of the building. The original structure was remodeled and modernized.³³³

At the Madrona School, the wood structure built in 1904 was demolished, and a brick addition was constructed on the northeast quadrant of the site. The addition was attached to the remodeled 1917 structure. When the renovated school was dedicated on November

³³⁰ Sale, p. 218.

³³¹ Sale, pp. 218-219.

³³² Thompson and Marr, p. 221.

³³³ Thompson and Marr, p. 176.

2, 1961, it had 25 class rooms, a new auditorium/lunch room, a kitchen, a covered playcourt, and a gymnasium.³³⁴

Meany Junior High School / Meany Middle School

The school board approved plans for new construction at Meany Middle School in October 1960. Several previous additions, including the 1955 addition designed by John W. Maloney, were kept, but the original 1902 building was torn down. The existing auditorium-gymnasium was converted into a lunchroom-auditorium. Classrooms, office facilities, and a new gymnasium were added. The new central core, a two-story brick structure designed by Edward Mahlum, was opened in April 1962.³³⁵

Washington Junior High School / Washington Middle School

Plans to build a new junior high school near 23rd Avenue S. and Jackson Street were announced in December 1958. The new building, designed to accommodate about 1,100 students, opened in 1963 with about 800 students. The architectural drawings were prepared by John Graham & Company.³³⁶

After closing in 1963, the old Washington building became the district's Occupational Guidance Center. It initially housed "classes in English for the Foreign Born and Basic Reading, as well as Prevocational Classes, the Family Life Education Program, and the Manpower Development and Training Program." By 1965-66, the building was being used by Seattle Community College, and during the summer of 1967, the property was divided in half, the south portion going to the Seattle School District and the north portion, which included the building, going to the newly independent community college. In 1967-68, the district located its Central Area Office at the site. The building has since been demolished.³³⁷

Garfield High School

A gymnasium building, designed by Bassetti & Morse, was added to the Garfield campus in 1962.³³⁸

The Slow Response to Social Change

Although these physical improvements to the school buildings serving the Central Area were welcome, it does not appear that the school district made any attempt to address the neighborhood's changing demographic characteristics. In the view of Roger Sales

³³⁴ Thompson and Marr, pp. 190-191.

³³⁵ Thompson and Marr, pp. 214, 215.

³³⁶ Thompson and Marr, p. 302.

³³⁷ Thompson and Marr, pp. 301, 302.

³³⁸ Thompson and Marr, p. 102. This gymnasium was destroyed when the main building and south wing were substantially remodeled between 2006 and 2008.

. . . people in Seattle had gone on feeling theirs was a quality school system, when in fact almost nothing new had happened in a generation to adjust to any changes in education or society. In turn, it was easy to place the fault on the poor, and the blacks, not on the schools themselves.³³⁹

Some of the problems with the schools, and with the neighborhood generally, stemmed from housing descrimination

Segregated Housing and Voluntary Integration Efforts

The citizens of Seattle defeated an open housing ordinance in March 1964.³⁴⁰ The proposed law was rejected by a margin of more than two to one, and the election that decided the issue also gave a number of older, entrenched city council members another term in office.³⁴¹

After the defeat of the open housing ordinance, an effort to integrate Seattle neighborhoods was undertaken by a number of individuals and groups. By the following year, one organization -- the Voluntary Listing Service -- had negotiated the sale to minorities of fifty-two homes having an aggregate value of over \$1,000,000. Homeowners in Leschi invited African Americans to integrate their neighborhood.³⁴²

In the summer of 1967, Governor Dan Evans (b. 1925) announced his support for open housing. Voluntary open housing groups were organized in Seattle suburbs such as Kirkland and Federal Way. This made it easier for African Americans to move out of the Central Area. However, as the more affluent families began to leave the neighborhood, property values dropped even further, exacerbating problems and tensions for those who

³³⁹ Sale, p. 218.

³⁴⁰ David Wilma, "Seattle City Council approves open housing ordinance on April 19, 1968," *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History*, April 2, 2001 (HistoryLink.org, Essay 1384, accessed February 7, 2009). Wilma cites Walt Crowley, *Rites of Passage: A Memoir of the Sixties in Seattle* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995), 255; Quintard Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle's Central District from 1870s through the Civil Rights Era* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), 205-208.

³⁴¹ Sale, p. 218.

³⁴² David Wilma, "Seattle City Council approves open housing ordinance on April 19, 1968," *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History*, April 2, 2001 (HistoryLink.org, Essay 1384, accessed February 7, 2009). Wilma cites Walt Crowley, *Rites of Passage: A Memoir of the Sixties in Seattle* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995), 255; Quintard Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle's Central District from 1870s through the Civil Rights Era* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), 205-208.

remained.³⁴³

De Facto School Segregation and Civil Rights

A natural outcome of segregated housing was segregated schools.

When the Seattle School Board took its first census of school enrollment by race in 1957, it found that 5 percent of the 91,782 pupils were black but that nine elementary schools, eight of which were located in or near the Central Area, contained 81 percent of elementary age black children.³⁴⁴ Six elementary schools serving the Central Area were more than 60 percent black.³⁴⁵ By the 1960s, the Seattle Urban League had identified seven Central Area schools having a disproportionate number of minority students.³⁴⁶

This defacto segregation was highly frustrating to civil rights leaders.³⁴⁷ Although Seattle schools were not segregated by law, and although local public officials had not encouraged segregation, indifference among members of the majority population had masked the growing disparities in the racial mix at school buildings in the Central Area compared to programs operating in other neighborhoods.³⁴⁸ Civil rights leaders began a fight to integrate the Seattle Public Schools.

Voluntary Racial Transfer Programs

The school board was convinced to support a voluntary racial transfer program in 1963.³⁴⁹ As a result of this program, the racial mix at Sand Point Elementary School began changing in 1965 when Central Area students joined the existing student body there as part of the Voluntary Transfer Program. During the 1967-68 school year, 51 pupils from Harrison and 13 from Madrona attended Sand Point;³⁵⁰ however, transportation was not provided by the school district, limiting the effectiveness of the effort to integrate the school system.

School Boycott

Civil rights leaders successfully waged a boycott of the schools on two days in the spring

³⁴³ David Wilma, "Seattle City Council approves open housing ordinance on April 19, 1968."

³⁴⁴ Taylor, p. 209.

³⁴⁵ Henry, "Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History."

³⁴⁶ Mary T. Henry, "Northwest African American Museum," *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History* (Essay 8602, April 21, 2008; accessed December 6, 2009).

³⁴⁷ Taylor, pp. 209-210.

³⁴⁸ Taylor, p. 210.

³⁴⁹ Henry, "Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History."

³⁵⁰ Thompson and Marr, p. 270.

of 1966.³⁵¹ The boycott, intended to demonstrate black community displeasure over the slow pace of integration, took place on March 31 and April 1, and included nearly 4,000 students. Boycott organizers were surprised when the event demonstrated considerable white and Asian support for integration.³⁵²

Closure of Horace Mann School

Civil rights leaders also called for the closure of Horace Mann School.³⁵³ Enrollment at Mann, located at 2410 E. Cherry Street in the heart of the Central Area just north of Garfield High School, had peaked in 1957-58 with 596 students.³⁵⁴ However, in 1964, the Central Area Civil Rights Committee (CACRC) made Horace Mann School the center of a three-sided controversy between itself, the School Board, and grassroots community activists. The school, with a 97 percent black enrollment in 1964, was a sixty-two-year-old, two story frame structure that many assumed would eventually be demolished. CACRC decided to press for the immediate closure of Mann to encourage the dispersal of blacks into other schools. Another organization, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), announced that the city faced the prospect of “peaceful, non-violent direct action” if the board refused to move expeditiously to end de facto segregation.³⁵⁵ By 1965, enrollment at the school had dropped to 252, and Mann was closed as an elementary school at the end of the 1967-68 school year.³⁵⁶ Some of the students transferred to Seward, located in the Eastlake neighborhood, which would later become part of the Central Area’s 4-4-4 program, a first attempt at mandatory desegregation.³⁵⁷

Urban Renewal and the Model Cities Program

Beginning in the mid-1950s, various planning and community action efforts were initiated in an attempt to improve conditions in the Central Area. According to Roger Sale, this work was initially undertaken by people living

. . . along the edges of the ghetto [where] one found bourgeois blacks and newcomer whites, the latter usually of the university or Group Health variety, each taking advantage of the suddenly reduced real estate prices to attempt to work out terms for integrated living. These people made up the bulk of the active civil rights groups, and their early achievements were both impressive and too little. There was a preschool project that became a national model for [Head Start], and an early Great Society community action project called the Central Area Motivation Program, or CAMP.³⁵⁸

³⁵¹ Henry, “Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History.”

³⁵² Taylor, p. 213.

³⁵³ Henry, “Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History.”

³⁵⁴ Thompson and Marr, p. 195.

³⁵⁵ Taylor, p. 211.

³⁵⁶ Thompson and Marr, p. 195.

³⁵⁷ Thompson and Marr, p. 279.

³⁵⁸ Sale, p. 218.

Urban Renewal

In 1956, a group of citizens began searching for ways to fund local improvements. It was determined that before federal funds could be received, changes to state law would be required. This took time, and as a result, several years passed before an urban renewal program could be initiated in Seattle. Finally, in 1964, the Yesler/Atlantic Urban Renewal Project was commenced.³⁵⁹

A major objective of the project was to remove substandard housing and replace it with high density, government subsidized housing. However, in 1969, after scores of buildings had been demolished within the Yesler/Atlantic project area, the Johnson administration was replaced by the Nixon administration, and the new government put an end to the subsidies thought necessary to encourage redevelopment of the cleared properties. As a result, tracts of land throughout the portion of the Central Area between Yesler Way and present day Interstate 90 -- varying in size from single lots to full blocks -- remained vacant for years.³⁶⁰

Central Area Motivation Program

The Central Area Motivation Program (CAMP) was founded in 1964 as part of the first generation of community inspired organizations funded by the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO).³⁶¹ The OEO, created in August 1964 by the Economic Opportunity Act, was the federal agency primarily responsible for administering the “War on Poverty” component of President Lyndon B. Johnson's “Great Society” agenda. The OEO funded and coordinated community action agencies such as Head Start, and federal programs such as the Job Corps, the Neighborhood Youth Corps, and Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA).³⁶²

In 1966, Walter R. Hundley (1929-2002) was asked to become the director of CAMP, by then the largest community action agency in King County. Hundley, who had relocated to the Puget Sound Region in 1954, initially worked in Seattle as a minister and later as a social worker. By the mid-1960s, he was a highly visible figure in Seattle’s civil rights movement, serving as chair of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and as a member of the Central Area Civil Rights Committee (CACRC). He was a leader in organizing the boycott against Seattle Public Schools and in promoting picketing and marches in pursuit

³⁵⁹ Nyberg and Steinbrueck.

³⁶⁰ Nyberg and Steinbrueck.

³⁶¹ *Central Area Motivation Program* (<http://www.campseattle.org>, n.d., accessed December 6, 2009)

³⁶² "Office of Economic Opportunity," *Encyclopedia of American History* (Answers Corporation, 2006, <http://www.answers.com/topic/oeo>; accessed December 6, 2009.)

of equal employment and housing opportunities. His successful administration of CAMP led to a career with the City of Seattle (he served as Director of the Office of Management and Budget from 1974 to 1977 and as Superintendent of the Department of Parks and Recreation from 1977 to 1988).³⁶³

The Model Cities Program

An early and important contribution of the Central Area Motivation Program was its assistance with planning for Seattle's participation in the federal Model Cities Program.³⁶⁴ This was another element of President Johnson's War on Poverty initiative. The Model Cities Program was authorized November 3, 1966 by the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966. It was developed as a response to widespread violence in large American cities, disillusionment with existing urban renewal programs, and bureaucratic difficulties that interfered with program administration in the early years of the War on Poverty. The legislation created a new program at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) intended to improve coordination of existing urban programs and to provide additional funds for local planning. The program's initial goals emphasized comprehensive planning (involving not just rebuilding but also rehabilitation), social service delivery, and citizen participation.³⁶⁵

In Seattle, the Model Cities Program was administered by the City's Executive Department. Its goals and objectives were to reduce social and economic disadvantages in designated neighborhoods, to maximize training and employment opportunities, and to establish health services for residents. The Central Area was identified in 1968 as the model neighborhood, although in 1972, the "Planned Variations Expansion" allowed extension of the program to a few other Seattle neighborhoods."³⁶⁶

CAMP's work allowed Seattle to become the first city in the nation to get its program under way.³⁶⁷ In 1968, Walter R. Hundley became director of the Seattle Model Cities Program, and under Hundley's supervision, the local operation became a model for the rest of the country.³⁶⁸

The Model Cities Program made a multitude of social, health, recreational, and

³⁶³ Mary T. Henry, "Hundley, Walter R. (1929-2002)," *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History* (Essay 3173, April 8 2001; accessed December 7, 2009).

³⁶⁴ Henry, "Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History."

³⁶⁵ "Model Cities Program," *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia* (December 5, 2008, Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., accessed July 11, 2009).

³⁶⁶ "Model City Program," *Guide to the Archives of the City of Seattle* (Record Group 5400, www.seattle.gov/cityarchives/Research/guide/5400.html; accessed December 27, 2009).

³⁶⁷ Henry, "Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History."

³⁶⁸ Henry, "Hundley, Walter R. (1929-2002)."

educational services available to Central Area residents. However, it is important to note that the program did not focus on improvements to the physical environment.³⁶⁹

Despite its successes in Seattle, this ambitious federal urban aid program ultimately fell short of its goals. With the change of administration in 1969, HUD retreated from its earlier insistence on citizen participation, and in 1974 the federal program ended.³⁷⁰ The Central Area Motivation Program continues in operation, however, one of only a few community organizations initiated as part of the War on Poverty program to survive into the 21st century.³⁷¹

Unrest and Protest in the Central Area

By the late 1960s, the Seattle's economy was beginning to suffer the effects of employment reductions at Boeing and in related industries. In addition, over a decade had passed without significant progress on issues important to Central Area residents.

Housing and job discrimination continued to create a great deal of unrest in the black community.³⁷² De facto school segregation, physical deterioration of the built environment, and threats to the integrity of the neighborhood from incompleting urban renewal projects and proposed regional transportation projects added to the dissatisfaction.

The low total number of African Americans in Seattle, and the fact that relatively few Seattleites were poor, meant that members of these minority groups "did not have and could not gain the type of city or state political base that blacks in other cities had."³⁷³ In addition, it has been suggested that the fact that most African Americans living in Seattle in the late 1960s were new to the city meant that the residents of the Central Area had not had enough time "to create a genuine community, and communication and trust among blacks could be easily strained, especially between older and younger people."³⁷⁴

Despite the improvement efforts undertaken by CAMP and the expected benefits of the recently organized Model Cities Program, frustration grew and Seattle's Central Area became the stage for marches, riots, and civil disobedience. A speech by Stokely Carmichael at Garfield High School in 1967 ignited calls for black power, and the Black Panther Party organized in the area.³⁷⁵

³⁶⁹ Henry, "Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History;" and Nyberg and Steinbrueck.

³⁷⁰ "Model Cities Program," *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia* (December 5, 2008, Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., accessed July 11, 2009).

³⁷¹ Henry, "Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History."

³⁷² Henry, "Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History."

³⁷³ Sale, p. 219.

³⁷⁴ Sale, p. 219.

³⁷⁵ Henry, "Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History."

Passage of the Open Housing Law

On April 19, 1968, the Seattle City Council unanimously approved a strong open housing ordinance with an emergency clause designed to give the new law immediate effect. Although the council had been deeply divided on the issue of open housing, unrest in large American cities following the assassination of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. on April 4, 1968 prompted the members to act together in an attempt to maintain racial peace.³⁷⁶

Summer of 1968 – People in the Streets

The passage of the open housing law and some widening of job opportunities for African Americans may have reduced tensions somewhat.³⁷⁷ However, these necessary changes did not put an end to the turmoil and protest in the Central Area. According to Roger Sale

During the summer of 1968 police helicopters circled over the Central Area night after night and huge squadrons of police cars were parked outside the fire station at 23rd and Yesler. Groups of Black Panthers drilled in the Madrona playfield, and white and Asian business people throughout the Central Area fled or built large protective screens around their stores. Hard-as-nails Police Chief Frank Ramon promised order would be maintained, and entrenched county prosecutor Charles O. Carroll insisted dissidents represented a minority of the black community, a statement approximately as true as it was irrelevant. The ‘long hot summer’ that black and white civil rights leaders had warned of came, as ‘civil rights’ itself was replaced by ‘Black Power’ as the rallying cry.³⁷⁸

The volatile situation in the Central Area became front-page news. On July 1, 1968, for example, Judge James Dore sentenced Aaron Dixon, Carl Miller, and future King County Council member Larry Gossett to six months in jail for unlawful assembly during a March 29 sit-in at Franklin High School, triggering riots in Seattle's Central Area. Several hundred young African Americans gathered at Garfield High School for a protest rally, which degenerated into rock throwing. Motorists passing through the area on 23rd Avenue were attacked with rocks and bricks, and two reporters were mobbed and injured when they arrived at the scene in a taxi.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁶ David Wilma, “Seattle City Council approves open housing ordinance on April 19, 1968,” *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History* (Essay 1384, April 2, 2001, accessed February 7, 2009). Wilma cites Walt Crowley, *Rites of Passage: A Memoir of the Sixties in Seattle* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995), 255; Quintard Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle's Central District from 1870s through the Civil Rights Era* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), 205-208.

³⁷⁷ Henry, “Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History,”

³⁷⁸ Sale, p. 216.

³⁷⁹ David Wilma, “Riots erupt in Seattle's Central Area after Franklin High protestors are sentenced on July 1, 1968,” *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State*

Other members of the community attempted to stop the trouble. "There were a large number of people from organizations [in the Central Area] and some just plain good citizens out in the streets doing their best to restore order," stated Police Chief Frank Ramon. Members of the Black Panther Party took a prominent role in the effort to quiet the disturbance. Despite these efforts, and a Seattle Police order to disperse, six persons were arrested in the course of the five hours of unrest.³⁸⁰

The following evening, more trouble erupted. A police helicopter was used to illuminate trouble spots and officers on the ground used tear gas. Rioters robbed two individuals in a passing car and then overturned their vehicle. Other motorists passing through the area were attacked with thrown objects. Fifteen persons were injured and treated at Providence Hospital.³⁸¹

After the second night of trouble, representatives of the Central Area Civil Rights Committee, the Black Panther Party, the Congress of Racial Equality, Model Cities, and the Central Area Motivation Program joined to urge parents to keep their children indoors.³⁸²

On July 29, 1968, seven Seattle policemen and two civilians were wounded by gunfire and rocks during another Central Area riot prompted by a police raid on the Seattle office of the Black Panther Party where Aaron Dixon and Curtis Harris, co-captains of the Party, were arrested for possession of a typewriter alleged to have been stolen.³⁸³

The riot continued despite an appeal issued by Dixon from the King County Jail (delivered by his lawyer William Dwyer), that such disturbances would only "jeopardize the lives of masses of black people."³⁸⁴

History (Essay 1515, January 01, 1900, accessed February 7, 2009). Wilma cites "Racial Disturbance Under Control in Garfield High Area," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, July 2, 1968, pp. 1, 3; "Central Folks Praised For Aid in Disorder," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, July 3, 1968, p. 1; Walt Crowley, *Rites of Passage: A Memoir of the Sixties in Seattle* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995), p. 257.

³⁸⁰ Wilma, "Riots erupt in Seattle's Central Area after Franklin High protestors are sentenced on July 1, 1968."

³⁸¹ Wilma, "Riots erupt in Seattle's Central Area after Franklin High protestors are sentenced on July 1, 1968."

³⁸² Wilma, "Riots erupt in Seattle's Central Area after Franklin High protestors are sentenced on July 1, 1968."

³⁸³ Alan J. Stein, "Seattle police raid Black Panther office in Central Area, setting off riots, on July 29, 1968," *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History* (Essay 1530, January 1, 2000, accessed February 7, 2009). Stein cites Walt Crowley, *Rites of Passage: A Memoir of the Sixties in Seattle* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995), 114, 118, 258.

³⁸⁴ Alan J. Stein, "Seattle police raid Black Panther office in Central Area, setting off riots, on July 29, 1968."

Two days later, on July 31, sixty-nine persons were arrested in the course of a two-hour Central Area melee that erupted in the aftermath of the arrests of Dixon and Harris. Thirteen fires were set and flying rocks injured motorists. Police eventually trapped rioters between two groups of officers to end the disturbance. Chief Ramon stated, "In a four month period on a dozen nights, groups of individuals in the same geographic areas have assaulted people, destroyed property, and caused disruption in a normally peaceful neighborhood. . . . We can't sit by night after night with this kind of disturbance going on." He declared that the Seattle Police would "use whatever action is necessary to maintain peace in the Central Area." The Seattle-King County Bar Association protested the mass arrests and interceded to win the freedom of most of those taken into custody. However, Mayor Braman announced that the mass arrests would continue and that there would be "no return to a policy of appeasement."³⁸⁵

On August 6, 1968, representatives of the Negro Voters League presented Mayor Braman with 26 complaints from African Americans alleging brutality and misconduct by Seattle Police Officers. Although the mayor accepted the documentation, he indicated that the actual investigation would "have to be done by the police department."³⁸⁶

Aaron Dixon and Curtis Harris were later acquitted in the matter of the typewriter.³⁸⁷

First African Methodist Episcopal Church and Civil Rights

From 1962 to 1969, Reverend John H. Adams was assigned to the First African Methodist Episcopal Church and his leadership in the community as well as in the church was instrumental in increasing respect for civil and human rights in the city.³⁸⁸

Public School Program Innovations

During the 1969-70 school year, the building that had formerly housed Horace Mann School became known as the Garfield Music Annex. The following year, the building was used as extra space for Garfield High School projects and offices. From 1970 to

³⁸⁵ David Wilma, "Mass arrests follow disturbances in Seattle's Central Area on July 31, 1968," *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History* (Essay 3307, July 29, 2004, accessed February 7, 2009). Wilma also cites "50 Arrested in City Disturbance," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, August 1, 1968, p.p 1, 2; "Court Frees 57 Arrested in Disorders," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, August 2, 1968, p. 1; "Mass Arrests Bring Bar Action," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, p. 1; "Mayor Gets Negro Unit's Complaints," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, August 7, 1968, p. 1, 18; Walt Crowley, *Rites of Passage: A Memoir of the Sixties in Seattle* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995), p. 258.

³⁸⁶ Wilma, "Mass arrests follow disturbances in Seattle's Central Area on July 31, 1968."

³⁸⁷ Wilma, "Mass arrests follow disturbances in Seattle's Central Area on July 31, 1968."

Wilma quotes *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, August 7, 1968.

³⁸⁸ Henry, "First African Methodist Episcopal Church (Seattle)."

1975, the building also housed the Extended Services Program (ESP), an alternative program for grades 9 through 12 developed by the Central Area community and the school district. It provided more individualized instruction and attention than was possible in the regular school setting. In 1975, ESP became the Garfield Alternative Program (GAP).³⁸⁹

In September 1975, another alternative high school called Nova joined GAP at Mann.³⁹⁰ Nova had been operating since 1970 in rented space at the downtown YMCA. Nova students earned all credits by fulfilling contracts, which they wrote themselves, and much of their work was completed outside of the classrooms. Attendance was not required.³⁹¹ The program is now known as the Nova Alternative High School @ Mann.

The Summit K-12 program, a third alternative school, was located at Mann from 1975 to 1977, then moved to the Colman building.³⁹²

The Colman building had already hosted some program experimentation. From 1968 to 1973, a federal grant brought Teachers Corps interns to Colman to assist in the classrooms for half-days.³⁹³ Colman also, for a time, emphasized the DISTAR (Direct Instruction Strategies for Teaching Arithmetic and Reading) method of teaching in a successful effort to improve academic test scores. The program, which was available at some other schools in the district, was designed to “provide students with a firm foundation in basic academic skills, such as reading, mathematics, and language.”³⁹⁴

Some Central Area schools began to experiment with non-graded instruction. At T. T. Minor, such a program was launched in 1966. The new approach also led to the introduction of a new instructional materials center and audio-visual center, and the remodeling of three areas of the building for team teaching. Student progress was tracked by level of achievement, rather than by traditional grades.³⁹⁵

Under the leadership of Harrison School Principal Louise McKinney, the “Harrison Early Childhood Education Center” also employed ungraded, continuous-progress education methods. Harrison became a demonstration school for grades K - 3 and many of the program’s 365 students came from outside of Harrison’s traditional attendance area.³⁹⁶

Harrison apparently experimented with ways to encourage parent involvement as well. The November 2, 1970 issue of *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* reported that over 250 parents were involved in the operation of the school. They prepared visual aids and instructional

³⁸⁹ Thompson and Marr, pp. 195-196.

³⁹⁰ Thompson and Marr, pp. 195-196.

³⁹¹ Thompson and Marr, pp. 195-196.

³⁹² Thompson and Marr, p. 196.

³⁹³ Thompson and Marr, p. 206.

³⁹⁴ Thompson and Marr, p. 206.

³⁹⁵ Thompson and Marr, p. 221.

³⁹⁶ Thompson and Marr, p. 157.

materials, provided counseling, and worked as cafeteria assistants, hall monitors, and tutors.³⁹⁷

In 1974, a school-wide election supported changing the school's name to Martin Luther King Early Childhood Education Center. and the renaming was subsequently approved by the school board. The following January 30, one hundred students from Lake City School came to the renamed school to attend special classes and programs related to Dr. King's life. The two schools were paired in a federally funded program aimed at "increasing contact between school age children of different backgrounds."³⁹⁸

School Desegregation: Central Area Schools and the 4-4-4 Plan

By the late 1960s, the school district had tried a number of voluntary programs for school desegregation; however, these schemes had been less than successful, perhaps because transportation had not been provided for students attending schools outside their neighborhoods. The school board decided to initiate a mandatory assignment program – this time with transportation -- involving four middle schools and the elementary schools feeding into them.³⁹⁹ Some components of the plan began to emerge in 1968-69 when the program at Leschi School was modified to provide instruction only for children in grades K – 4.⁴⁰⁰ Then a Central Area School Council was formed in 1969 in an attempt to give the community a stronger voice in the management of their schools.⁴⁰¹

In 1970, a more general reorganization of schools in the city's Central Area, called the 4-4-4 Plan, began. School programs were reconfigured so that elementary, middle and high schools each had four grade levels.⁴⁰²

T. T. Minor (where the student population was 92 percent African-American prior to the district's voluntary racial transfer program) became a K-4 school.⁴⁰³

Over 250 students from the Colman School's predominantly African American student body were bused to schools in the northern part of the city.⁴⁰⁴

Meany and Madrona became linked as a middle school in 1970. Together, the two schools served students in grades 5-8; however, the 7th and 8th graders attended Meany⁴⁰⁵ while Madrona became "B Center (Madrona)" and served 5th and 6th graders. The kindergarten rooms at Madrona became art and family life rooms. A former

³⁹⁷ Thompson and Marr, p. 157.

³⁹⁸ Thompson and Marr, p. 157.

³⁹⁹ Thompson and Marr, p. xiv.

⁴⁰⁰ Thompson and Marr, p. 176.

⁴⁰¹ Thompson and Marr, p. 216.

⁴⁰² Thompson and Marr, p. 221.

⁴⁰³ Thompson and Marr, p. 221.

⁴⁰⁴ Thompson and Marr, p. 206.

⁴⁰⁵ Thompson and Marr, p. 216.

playcourt became a Learning Resource Center. The physical changes were accompanied by a change in faculty and administrators.⁴⁰⁶

Desegregation efforts affecting the two buildings began in 1971 when middle school students from the Wilson, Eckstein, and Hamilton neighborhoods were bused to Meany-Madrona, while students from the Meany-Madrona attendance area were transported to one of the north end schools. A total of 842 students were selected to participate in the first year of the middle school desegregation program. “The district aimed to reduce the percentage of African Americans at Meany-Madrona to 25 percent while increasing the percentage at north end schools to 16 percent.”⁴⁰⁷

In 1972-73, 15 percent of the 320 student at Sacajawea were from minority groups, half from the neighborhood and half voluntary transfers from the Central Area.⁴⁰⁸

In 1970, the Wahsington Junior High School campus became an annex for Garfield High School. For eight years, the former junior high school was known as “Garfield B.” It housed academic and vocational education classes for high school students, and a special program to help school-age parents continue their education began there in 1976. When the Pacific School building was declared unsafe, the Pacific Handicapped Program was relocated to Garfield B as well. The move took place during the 1975-76 Christmas break.⁴⁰⁹ The Washington campus continued to host the Garfield B program until 1978.

A More Aggressive Mandatory School Desegregation Plan

Depite its mandatory nature, the desegregation plan implemented during the early 1970s was limited in its application and failed to

substantially correct the increasing racial imbalance so, in 1977, the school board adopted a sweeping mandatory plan, exempting only kindergarten children, that included over one-half of the district’s schools.

Transportation was provided for students reassigned throughout the district, and special magnet programs were established to encourage enrollment at certain schools and programs. This desegregation plan impacted school building use by changing enrollment numbers within clusters, shifting feeder patterns, altering grade configurations, and requiring the development of space for magnet programs.⁴¹⁰

The new plan was put into operation in 1978.

In September 1978, T. T Minor housed a K, 3-5 program and was paired with Bryant, a

⁴⁰⁶ Thompson and Marr, p. 191.

⁴⁰⁷ Thompson and Marr, p. 191.

⁴⁰⁸ Thompson and Marr, p. 268.

⁴⁰⁹ Thompson and Marr, p. 302.

⁴¹⁰ Thompson and Marr, p. xiv.

K-2 program.⁴¹¹ Leschi became a K, 4-5 school and operated as part a triad with Decatur and Wedgwood, both of which housed grades K-3. These program configurations continued until 1988.⁴¹²

Under the 1978 desegregation plan, Bailey Gatzert School, built in 1921, was linked with B. F. Day School and Whittier School and was operated as a K-2 school.⁴¹³ Colman, which served K-2 students, became part of a triad with Greenlake and Ravenna.⁴¹⁴

At Madrona, parents and staff became concerned that their middle schoolers required more growing space. As a result, in the March 1978 desegregation plan, the district decided to return the Madrona building to its original function as an elementary school.⁴¹⁵ In September 1978, Madrona middle schoolers began attending classes at the former Washington Junior High School campus, which became Washington Middle School. The Pacific Handicapped Program moved to Wilson.⁴¹⁶ Madrona became a “magnet school” and was made the home of an elementary program for highly capable students, known as the Individualized Progress Program or IPP. “IPP students, most of whom came by bus from all over the city, shared the building with the regular elementary program. In the first few years of this arrangement, IPP students attended separate classes for reading, social studies, and math while sharing classes in music, art, and physical education. Later the two groups were completely separated.”⁴¹⁷

In 1981-82, Madrona became a (K,4-6) program as part of the district’s desegregation plan, part of a triad with Sacajawea (K-3) and Rogers (K-3)⁴¹⁸

Meany also participated in the city-wide desegregation plan initiated in 1978.⁴¹⁹

R. H. Thomson Expressway

The stresses and tensions resulting from the difficult and changing social environment were exacerbated by the growing possibility of further disruptions to the physical fabric of the neighborhood.

An increase in the volume of arterial traffic passing through the Central Area on its way to outlying suburbs was already beginning to fragment the neighborhood and the threat of

⁴¹¹ Thompson and Marr, p. 221.

⁴¹² Thompson and Marr, p. 176.

⁴¹³ Thompson and Marr, p. 110.

⁴¹⁴ Thompson and Marr, p. 206.

⁴¹⁵ Thompson and Marr, p. 191.

⁴¹⁶ Thompson and Marr, p. 302.

⁴¹⁷ Thompson and Marr, p. 192.

⁴¹⁸ Thompson and Marr, p. 268.

⁴¹⁹ Thompson and Marr, p. 216.

new freeway construction rekindled concerns about the loss of existing development that first appeared in the course of urban renewal in the Yesler/Atlantic area.⁴²⁰

One of the proposed limited access highways, to be named for former City Engineer Reginald H. Thomson (1856-1949), was to have run north from Interstate 90 through the Central Area, then continued through Montlake and the University of Washington Arboretum before diving under Union Bay on its way to an interchange with another proposed highway project (the Bothell Freeway) at a point north of Ravenna.⁴²¹

Voters gave their approval for the R. H. Thomson Expressway project in 1960, but when the route was shifted west of the Arboretum and threatened to take out homes in the Montlake neighborhood as well as the Central Area, residents filed suit.⁴²²

A group called Citizens Against the R. H. Thomson Expressway organized to oppose the project and by 1969 the City Council was refusing to spend any more money to study the matter. In 1972, voters “rescinded the project's bond money,” and the Seattle City Council finally decided to abandon the project altogether on June 1, 1977.⁴²³

Interstate 5, the Colman School, the Northwest African American Museum, and Thurgood Marshall Elementary School.

Colman School Closed

In the late 1960s, the state highway department began purchasing homes at the south end of the Central Area in the vicinity of the Colman School to expand the right of way for a new highway, Interstate 90, to be built along the route of old US 10. Houses near the school were demolished and the school became isolated from its surroundings. The future of the school became increasingly uncertain, and Colman finally closed as an elementary school in June 1979. Later that year, the Summit K-12 alternative school began operating in the Colman building.⁴²⁴

The Northwest African American Museum

In 1981, the Community Exchange, a multi-racial coalition, presented Mayor Charles Royer with a proposal to establish an African American museum in Seattle. Three years

⁴²⁰ Nyberg and Steinbrueck.

⁴²¹ David Wilma, “Seattle City Council cancels R. H. Thomson Expressway on June 1, 1977,” *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History* (Essay 2446, May 22, 2000, accessed February 7, 2009). Wilma cites Walt Crowley, *Rites of Passage: A Memoir of the Sixties in Seattle* (Seattle: University of Washington, 1997), p. 287, and an article in *Pacific* (the magazine section of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*), June 18, 1989, pp. 12-27.

⁴²² Wilma, “Seattle City Council cancels R. H. Thomson Expressway on June 1, 1977.”

⁴²³ Wilma, “Seattle City Council cancels R. H. Thomson Expressway on June 1, 1977.”

⁴²⁴ Thompson and Marr, pp. 206-207.

later, a task force was formed with the goal of realizing the museum proposal. The task force, which included community members Omari Tahir-Garrett, Mona Bailey, Esther Mumford, Ann Gerber, P. Razz Garrison, and Janice Cate, apparently did not initially focus on finding a permanent site.⁴²⁵

When highway construction caused the Summit alternative program to be relocated to Jane Addams in September 1985, the old Colman building was left vacant.⁴²⁶ In November 1985, a group of African Americans activists -- disillusioned by the failure of the task force to immediately identify a location for the museum -- moved into the vacant school. The core members of this group included Earl Debman, Michael Greenwood, Charlie James, and task force member Omari Tahir-Garrett. The activists, who became known as the Citizens Support Committee for the African American Heritage Museum/Cultural Center, used several of the school rooms for exhibit space and sponsored community activities including a forum on Aids and Racism.⁴²⁷

The occupation continued until 1993, when the City of Seattle agreed to fund the museum.⁴²⁸ That year, a not-for-profit organization called the African American Heritage Museum and Cultural Center was formed and a Board of Directors was selected to oversee the project with the office of Seattle Mayor Norm Rice.⁴²⁹

The task force members and the activists, who both purported to represent the effort to establish the museum, entered into a long series of discussions but found it almost impossible to develop a common vision for the proposed facility.⁴³⁰ Finally, in 2001, the Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle took on the project.⁴³¹

The Urban League bought the Colman building from the school district in 2003 for \$800,000 and redeveloped it as a mixed-use structure containing a 19,000 square foot museum on the ground floor and 36 units of affordable rental housing (the Urban League Village) on the two floors above. The project cost \$22.6 million, including \$8.1 million for museum construction. The Northwest African American Museum opened March 8, 2008.⁴³² About the time the redevelopment process got underway, the Colman School

⁴²⁵ Mary T. Henry, "Northwest African American Museum," *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History* (Essay 8602, April 21, 2008; accessed December 6, 2009).

⁴²⁶ Thompson and Marr, pp. 206-207.

⁴²⁷ Mary T. Henry, "Northwest African American Museum," *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History* (Essay 8602, April 21, 2008; accessed December 6, 2009).

⁴²⁸ Henry, "Northwest African American Museum."

⁴²⁹ "A Brief History," *NAAM: Northwest African American Museum* (Seattle: Northwest African American Museum, <http://naamnw.org/History.html>, n.d., accessed December 6, 2009).

⁴³⁰ Henry, "Northwest African American Museum."

⁴³¹ "A Brief History."

⁴³² Henry, "Northwest African American Museum."

building was designated a Seattle Landmark.

The Colman School Replaced by Thurgood Marshall Elementary School

Under the terms of a 1972 agreement, the state highway commission agreed to provide the Seattle School District with land and funding for a new school.⁴³³ A formal agreement with the state for funding the replacement building came in 1987, allowing the district to proceed with design. Construction began in September 1990.⁴³⁴

The new structure, located at 2401 South Irving Street, occupies a narrow 7.4 acre site adjacent to the lid that covers Interstate 90. The two story, steel frame, brick veneer building was designed by Mahlum & Nordfors. It contains 16 regular classrooms, two kindergartens, two resource rooms, one art/science room, and five classrooms for handicapped students. There is also a detached single-story childcare facility on the site. The playground is located atop the I-90 lid.⁴³⁵

The new school opened September 1991 and was initially known as J. M. Colman Elementary School; however, in 1996 the school was renamed for Thurgood Marshall, the nation's first African American Supreme Court Justice who, before being appointed to the court, fought successfully for desegregation of the nation's public schools. The student population is over 70 percent minority, and most of the minority students are African American.⁴³⁶

Community Resources at the End of the Period of Turmoil

Health Care Facilities

Providence Hospital, completed in 1912, still stands on the hill at 17th and East Cherry. The original building, designated a Seattle Landmark in 2003, has since been significantly altered to accommodate a change of use from hospital to medical laboratory.

The Odessa Brown Children's Clinic on Yesler Way is a legacy of the Model Cities Program.⁴³⁷ It opened in 1970, at 2017 East Spruce Street and moved into a new building at 2101 East Yesler Way in 1980.⁴³⁸ The clinic is now a component of Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center,⁴³⁹ and a Central Area institution.

⁴³³ Thompson and Marr, pp. 206-207.

⁴³⁴ Thompson and Marr, p. 207.

⁴³⁵ Thompson and Marr, p. 207.

⁴³⁶ Thompson and Marr, p. 207.

⁴³⁷ Henry, "Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History."

⁴³⁸ "Odessa Brown Children's Clinic," *BlackPast.org* (accessed December 6, 2009).

⁴³⁹ Mary T. Henry, "Lavizzo, Dr. Blanche Sellers (1925-1984)," *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History* (Essay 5651 February 9, 2004, accessed December 6, 2009).

Branch Libraries in the Central Area

The Yesler Memorial Branch of the Seattle Public Library, built at the corner of 23rd and Yesler Way in 1914,⁴⁴⁰ was renamed the Douglass-Truth Branch in 1975 to honor Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth.⁴⁴¹ The building houses the largest collection of books by and about African Americans in the Seattle Public Library system.⁴⁴² Between June 2005 and October 2006, the building was refurbished and expanded with a dramatically modern addition designed by Schacht Aslani Architects and built by Construction Enterprises and Contractors Inc.

In 1971, Madrona Community Council president Sally Goldmark (1907-1985) began to work with Seattle Library Board Member Betsy Darrah on a proposal to build a new library for Madrona and the northeastern part of the Central Area. Because of the economic downturn following the “Boeing Bust” there was no money for a new branch, so Goldmark and Darrah developed a three-month trial program for a community reading center -- to be called a Book-tique -- in a vacant storefront at 1410 34th Avenue East. The facility was to be stocked with about 1,500 books and staffed by two college students under the supervision of Yesler Branch Children's Librarian Linda Brass.⁴⁴³

The Book-Tique opened on July 12, 1971. Initial use was high, but after school started in September, patronage dropped off substantially. The doors closed at the end of the month; however, Goldmark and Darrah simply looked for another opportunity to press ahead, and when Fire Station No. 12, at 33rd Avenue East and East Union Street, closed in 1972, Goldmark got the City's facilities people to rent the empty space to the library for \$100 a year. The library remodeled the 1919 structure, and the Stationhouse Branch Library opened on February 11, 1973.⁴⁴⁴

In 1984, an aluminum sculpture called *The Peaceable Kingdom* by Richard Beyer (sculptor of the well known *Waiting for the Interurban*) appeared on the library's front lawn. The life-size casting depicts a sheep and a lamb mingling comfortably with a lion and a wolf.⁴⁴⁵

Sally Goldmark died May 31, 1985, and the branch was renamed the Madrona -- Sally Goldmark Branch the following year.⁴⁴⁶

A second remodel of the old firehouse was completed in 2008. Heliotrope Architects

⁴⁴⁰ Henry, “Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History.”

⁴⁴¹ Crowley, p. 145.

⁴⁴² Henry, “Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History.”

⁴⁴³ David Wilma, “Madrona-Sally Goldmark Branch, The Seattle Public Library,” *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History* (Essay 4034, April 3, 2009; accessed July 4, 2009).

⁴⁴⁴ Wilma, “Madrona-Sally Goldmark Branch, The Seattle Public Library.”

⁴⁴⁵ Wilma, “Madrona-Sally Goldmark Branch, The Seattle Public Library.”

⁴⁴⁶ Wilma, “Madrona-Sally Goldmark Branch, The Seattle Public Library.”

prepared the design for the renovation.⁴⁴⁷

Medgar Evers Swimming Pool

The Medgar Evers Swimming Pool, which opened in 1970 at 23rd and Jefferson immediately north of Garfield High School, was the first of seven pools to be built with Forward Thrust funds. It was named for the slain Mississippi civil rights leader.⁴⁴⁸

Some Central Area Parks

The largest park in the Central Area is the Powell Barnett Park between Cherry and Alder streets on Martin Luther King Jr. Way. It was developed in 1967 by the Central Area Motivation Project and is named for a black community leader.⁴⁴⁹

Other parks in the area are the Edwin T. Pratt Park at 20th and Yesler, named for an Urban League Director killed by an unknown assailant, and the Dr. Blanche Lavizzo Park near 20th Avenue and Jackson Street, named in honor of the first medical director of the Odessa Brown Children's Clinic.⁴⁵⁰

On property adjoining the Leschi School is Peppi's Playground, named at the suggestion of Leschi students in honor of a classmate, Peppi Braxton, who died in 1971. "The park contained a wading pool, swings, and large freeform objects for climbing. With its trees and panoramic views of Lake Washington, the park is often used as an outdoor classroom" by students at the school.⁴⁵¹

1980 School Closure Plan

By the end of the 1970s, a fifty percent decline in enrollment, caused primarily by the dramatic drop in birthrate marking the end of the postwar baby boom, left the Seattle School District with too many school buildings operating far under their enrollment capacity. In 1980, the school board enacted a comprehensive and far reaching school closure plan. However, the major closures were in the north and north/central areas of the city, in Queen Anne/Magnolia, and in West Seattle. The southeastern and central portions of the city were less affected by enrollment decline and school closures.⁴⁵²

In the Central Area, the effects of the school closure plan were minimal. The Horace Mann School was closed as an elementary in 1968 but its building has remained in continuous use by the school district since that time and now houses the Nova Alternative High School program.

⁴⁴⁷ Wilma, "Madrona-Sally Goldmark Branch, The Seattle Public Library."

⁴⁴⁸ Henry, "Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History."

⁴⁴⁹ Henry, "Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History."

⁴⁵⁰ Henry, "Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History."

⁴⁵¹ Thompson and Marr, p. 176.

⁴⁵² Thompson and Marr, p. xiv.

Most of the elementary schools, including King, Leschi, Madrona, and Minor, continued operating into the 21st century. The two middle schools, Meany and Washington, and Garfield High School also survived the closures.

Two of the elementary school buildings that served the Central Area were closed as schools, but the programs were moved to new structures.

As discussed earlier, the Colman building was closed as a school in 1985 but survived construction of Interstate 90 and has since been renovated to serve the Northwest African American Museum. The students in the Colman School's attendance area are now served by a new building, Thurgood Marshall Elementary School, located between South Irving Street and the northern edge of the I-90 lid.

Gatzert was closed in 1984 when the district determined that the building was vulnerable to earthquake damage. The structure was demolished in 1987, and its former site is now occupied by the Seattle Indian Center. However, the Gatzert program moved to a new building. The present Bailey Gatzert Elementary School is located at 1301 East Yesler Way, four blocks north and a block east of the original Gatzert Elementary. The new masonry veneer building, designed by Burr, Lawrence & Rising, opened in December 1988, displacing six businesses, 40 to 50 residents, two churches and a fraternal club.⁴⁵³

⁴⁵³ Thompson and Marr, pp. 109-110.

The Central Area Today

Changes to Public Schools After 1988

The desegregation plan developed in 1977 and implemented in 1978 did not include all district schools, and the resulting disparities in enrollment created under-utilized schools, often near schools that were overcrowded. In addition, the lack of standardization of grade level organization in middle schools was confusing to parents and students.⁴⁵⁴

In 1988, the school board adopted a plan called Controlled Choice that created a standard K-5, 6-8, 9-12 organization (with some allowances for K-8 programs at certain schools). The district was divided into eight school clusters. Parents could choose from schools in their cluster. This plan was modified in 1995 when the school board decided to move to a plan with open enrollment at the secondary level and modified clusters at the elementary level.⁴⁵⁵

T.T. Minor School

In September 1998, T. T. Minor became home to an experiment launched by philanthropist Stuart Sloan, a successful Seattle businesses owner. Under an agreement worked out with school district officials, Sloan pledged to give the struggling inner city school \$1 million a year for at least eight years, allowing the school to add staff, reduce class sizes, provides access to health care and other services, and institute a year-round, extended day schedule. The students attended school from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. and receive two meals plus a snack. Each year an additional grade was added to the starting with the first grade and going up.⁴⁵⁶

Leschi Elementary School

In 1984, Leschi became one of 16 schools identified as needing renovation. After a series of community meetings, the decision was made to demolish the 1909 structure. Leschi students were relocated to Broadview-Thomson for the 1987-88 school year. A steel frame, brick veneer addition, was appended to the remaining 1961 structure, resulting in a building with 18 classrooms plus art/science resource rooms, two kindergarten rooms, an auditorium/lunchroom, a library, a gym, and an administrative area.⁴⁵⁷

A magnet program at Leschi offers instruction in marine science, television productions, speech, and drama. The Leschi Community Council provides financial assistance and volunteer tutors. Students are required to wear uniforms.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁴ Thompson and Marr, p. xv.

⁴⁵⁵ Thompson and Marr, p. xv.

⁴⁵⁶ Thompson and Marr, pp. 221-222.

⁴⁵⁷ Thompson and Marr, p. 176.

⁴⁵⁸ Thompson and Marr, p. 176.

Madrona School

In September 1997, the students participating in the Individualized Progress Program or IPP (renamed the Accelerated Progress Program, or APP) were moved to Lowell, reducing Madrona's enrollment to 295 students, and Madrona became a K-8 pbetween 1998 and 2001.⁴⁵⁹

Martin Luther King Elementary School

King became a K-5 neighborhood school in 1989. By the early 1990s, it was the smallest elementary school in the Seattle School District. Some viewed this as beneficial; however, the school soon faced the challenge of bringing its enrollment up to the district's 200-student minimum. The school survived into the 21st century, considered by some to be "best kept secret" in the district because of its preschool program, special education class, new computer lab, and occupational therapy program. A federal grant allowed it to become the first magnet school for performing arts and technology in the district. The school maintains a special relationship with the Bush School, a private school located nearby whose high school students come to King to tutor pupils.⁴⁶⁰

Edmond S. Meany Middle School

In 1987, Meany won national recognition from the U. S. Department of Education as an exemplary secondary school. In spite of this, Meany's enrollment sank to 591 in 1989, the lowest of the district's ten middle schools.⁴⁶¹

In 1996, Meany Middle School was reorganized as a math, science and arts magnet school, and enrollment rose to 618 students. "A pilot Montessori program began in 1998-99 in a single multigrade classroom. The school also boasts award-winning musical groups and an aviation training program, which integrates multiple subjects and hands-on activities. The aviation students build replica planes and hot air balloons, then go to Boeing Field for flying experience."⁴⁶²

Washington Middle School

Washington Middle School has become the home of the school district's middle school section of the Accelerated Progress Program (APP). The school also houses a special education program. Washington boasts an award winning jazz band and orchestra, and its students have won several statewide math competitions in recent years.⁴⁶³

⁴⁵⁹ Thompson and Marr, p. 192.

⁴⁶⁰ Thompson and Marr, pp. 157-158.

⁴⁶¹ Thompson and Marr, p. 216.

⁴⁶² Thompson and Marr, p. 216.

⁴⁶³ Thompson and Marr, p. 302.

James A. Garfield High School

When the school board adopted the Controlled Choice plan in 1988, Garfield became a four year comprehensive high school with an enrollment of approximately 1750 students. It houses a science magnet program.⁴⁶⁴ (In fact, Garfield became Seattle's first 'magnet school' in the the course of the school district's early attempts to promote voluntary desegregation.⁴⁶⁵) For several years, the school has produced more National Merit Scholars than any other school in the region.⁴⁶⁶

Garfield High School was designated a Seattle Landmark in the first decade of the 21st century. The main building and south wing were remodeled in the years from 2006 to 2008; a completely new auditorium/performance hall and a sports facility were added at the north end of the campus in the course of the renovation.

First African Methodist Episcopal Church

The First African Methodist Episcopal Church remains one of the oldest institutions in the Central Area. In addition to its 14th Street facility, which includes the renovated sanctuary and added wing for religious education, the First African Methodist Episcopal Church has several housing investments, which include the Texada Apartments at 1128 13th Avenue, Bryant Manor at 18th Avenue and East Yesler Way, and the Imperial Apartments at 1427 East Pike. These structures provide housing for seniors and low-income citizens and continue an outreach strategy that has been a part of the church's mission for many years.⁴⁶⁷

Education has been a major focus in the church. First AME Head Start Classes are offered at several locations outside the 14th Street facility, and the church operates a Day Care Center as well as an Educational Enhancement Program established in 1988 for middle school students.⁴⁶⁸

Other Present Day Institutions

The Edison Technical School Gompers Branch, at 23rd Avenue South and South Lane Street, operates in the formerly Jackson Street School (23rd Avenue South and South King Street).

Two relatively new institutions are the Anne E. Casey Family Foundation, located at 23rd Avenue and East Union Street, just a block from where United Parcel Service (UPS)

⁴⁶⁴ Thompson and Marr, p. 104.

⁴⁶⁵ Crowley, p. 146.

⁴⁶⁶ Thompson and Marr, p. 104.

⁴⁶⁷ Henry, "First African Methodist Episcopal Church (Seattle)."

⁴⁶⁸ Henry, "First African Methodist Episcopal Church (Seattle)."

founder Jim Casey grew up, and the slender new Planned Parenthood building at 21st Avenue and East Madison Street.⁴⁶⁹

The Samuel E. McKinney Home on East Madison Street, a facility for elderly residents named for the former pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church, has appeared on East Madison.⁴⁷⁰

Gentrification

The 1990s have seen a gradual change in the color and economic status of the Central Area's residents. The African American community has expanded to the south along the Rainier Avenue corridor and into Renton and Skyway, and the Central Area has experiencing some “gentrification” as the numbers of white couples with children has increased. In 1990, almost no Central Area families had annual incomes exceeding \$35,000, but more recently some residents (predominantly white and mostly new hires at Boeing and Microsoft) have been able boast of six digit incomes. However, there are still a significant number of black families living in the Central Area, and those elderly people who have been able to manage their property taxes have remained in their Central Area homes.⁴⁷¹

The Central Area Development Association, a community-based non-profit corporation dedicated to preserving the area's unique cultural heritage, has attempted to provide affordable housing and develop strong business partnerships in the neighborhood. New mixed-use buildings are being built near 23rd Avenue and Jackson Street and older apartment buildings are being remodeled.⁴⁷²

During the summer of 2008, in the course of completing a survey of houses built prior to 1906, the author met casually with a number of Central Area residents on the sidewalks of the neighborhood. There were a variety of views about the neighborhood and its future. Some owners appreciated the historic character of their houses, or the rich history of the Central Area itself, and were trying to maintain the exteriors of their homes while remodeling the interiors for modern use. Others were simply waiting for an opportunity to sell their property to a developer; older single-family structures are being replaced with multifamily projects, particular in the southern end of the neighborhood. Although a few expressed concern that present residents were being forced out by the developers, city officials, drug dealers, or bankers, for most residents, the Central Area's legacy appears rich, and its future looks bright.

⁴⁶⁹ Henry, “Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History.”

⁴⁷⁰ Henry, “Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History.”

⁴⁷¹ Henry, “Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History.”

⁴⁷² Henry, “Seattle Neighborhoods: Central Area -- Thumbnail History.”

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Appendix A: Landmarks

LANDMARKS IN CENTRAL AREA

Black Property, 1319 12th Ave. So., Ord. #110353, 12-28-81.

Immaculate Conception Church, 820 18th Ave., Ord. #106142, 01-10-77.

Langston Hughes Cultural Arts Center, 104 17th Ave. So., Ord. #110354, 12-28-81.

Old Fire Station #23, 722 18th Ave., Ord. #106050, 12-21-76.

Seattle Buddhist Church, 1427 S. Main St., Ord. #106100, 12-27-76.

Twenty-Third Avenue Houses Group, 812-828 23rd Ave., Ord. #108732, 12-24-79.

Victorian House, 1414 S. Washington St., Ord. #108225, 05-12-79.

Victorian Row Apartment Building, 1236-38 So. King St., Ord. #108224, 05-14-79.

James W. Washington, Jr., Home and Studio, 1816 - 26th Ave., Ord. #116052, 01-27-92.

Yesler Houses, 103, 107 and 109 23rd Ave., Ord. #118983, 04-27-98

Douglass-Truth Library, 2300 E. Yesler Way, Ord. #121107, 03-24-03.

Providence Hospital 1910 Building, 528 17th Ave., Ord. #121588, 09-13-04

Seattle Fire Station #6, 101 23rd Ave S, Ord #122462, 08-13-07

(Garfield High School, 400 23rd Ave.)

(Seattle Firestation #13, 3601 Beacon Avenue S.)

(Japanese Language School, 1414 S. Weller St.)