

# Garfield

|                |                                      |             |                  |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|-------------|------------------|
| Name:          | <b>James A. Garfield High School</b> | Enrollment: | 1,743            |
| Address:       | 400 23rd Avenue                      | Nickname:   | Bulldogs         |
| Configuration: | 9–12                                 | Colors:     | Purple and white |
| Newspaper:     | <i>The Messenger</i>                 | Annual:     | <i>The Arrow</i> |

In 1917, the Seattle School Board authorized the purchase of property for East High School at a location suggested by the board's secretary, Reuben Jones, because it was "on a hill and the school would stand out." Construction was delayed until the end of World War I, and by that time there was a pressing need for space in the city's four high schools. Immediate action had to be taken, which meant that a temporary structure was erected at the East High School site in 1920. The 12-room wooden structure housed 282 incoming freshmen who transferred from Broadway High School.

Midway through the 1920–21 school year, 140 more students entered East High School. Portables were added, and, by 1922–23, a total of 27 temporary buildings stood on the grounds. Enrollment by this time exceeded 900 students. Additional property was acquired and construction began on a permanent building.

The first principal, George N. Porter, suggested that the school be named after James A. Garfield, 20th President of the United States who earned recognition as a congressman and Civil War leader. Porter also selected the Bulldog as school mascot and the colors purple and white.

The new James A. Garfield High School opened in September 1923 with over 1,000 students. The three-story structure was designed in the Jacobean style with elaborate terra cotta details. The main (north) entrance features a projecting bay with triple arched doorways.

As the 1920s progressed, Garfield's student body increased to over 1,500. A bond issue passed in March 1929 provided funds for an addition to the building. The south wing included laboratories and classrooms for 680 more students. Enrollment continued to grow until 1939, when it reached an all-time high of 2,300 students. In 1955, 9th graders transferred to junior high school, reducing enrollment from 1,500 to 1,250.

Throughout much of its history, Garfield has been known for its ethnic and racial diversity. *The Arrow* in 1938 described the school as "a thriving community comprised of many races which are bound together by the staunchness of the Bulldog tradition." *The Christian Science Monitor* featured Garfield in 1946, referring to it as a school of many races but no race conflicts. The 1945 annual emphasized contributions made by various groups in the school, including a Cathay Club that staged Chinese plays, Japanese-American pupils who performed traditional dances, and African-American musicians.

From the beginning, Garfield set high standards for its publications. The school annual, *The Arrow*, received the All-American Honor Rating from the National Scholastic Press Association in 1934–36. *The Messenger*, the school newspaper, grew from a single page to an eight-page tabloid and also received national recognition. Garfield's literary magazine, *The Pen*, provided an outlet for creative writers beginning in 1938.

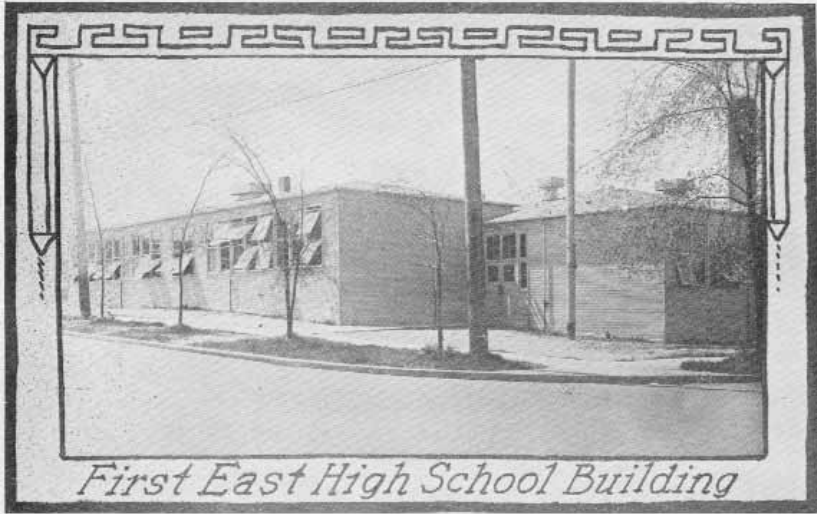
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|------------|-----------------------------|
| Name:      | <b>East High School</b>     |
| Location:  | 24th Avenue and E Jefferson |
| Building:  | 12-room, 1-story wood       |
| Architect: | n.a.                        |
| Site:      | n.a.                        |

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|-------|---|
| 1920: | Opened  |
| 1921: | Renamed <i>James A. Garfield High School</i> on November 18 |
| 1922: | Site expanded to 4.42 acres                                 |
| 1923: | Closed in June  |

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East High, 1921 SPSA, *The Arrow*, 1921

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Name: **James A. Garfield High School**

Location: 400 23rd Avenue  
 Building: 3-story brick and reinforced concrete

Architect: Floyd A. Naramore  
 Site: 4.42 acres

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1923: Opened in September

1929: Addition (Naramore)

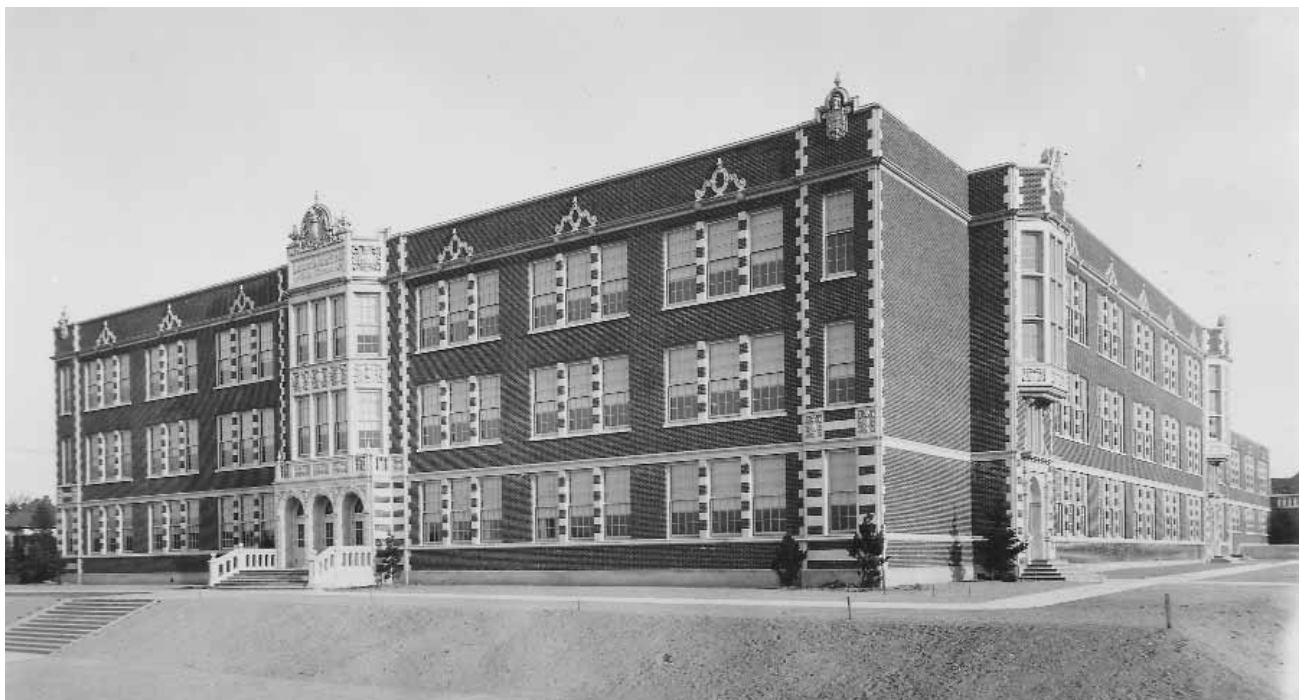
n.a.: Site expanded to 8.7 acres

1962: Addition (Bassetti & Morse)

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Activities growing in popularity during the first two decades were numerous service, music, and athletic clubs. The Big “G” Club was established for girls who were active in sports. The Ski Club, which sponsored trips to Snoqualmie Summit, won several ski tournaments in the 1930s. Athletic successes for the decade 1950–60 included four city football championships, two tennis titles, two baseball championships, and a state AA tournament trophy in basketball.

Garfield students and staff also established a tradition of community involvement. During the 1950s, the art department worked with Harborview and the Veterans’ Administration hospitals to create murals and other projects. The memorial wall at the east entrances to Memorial Stadium was designed by a Garfield student. In 1947, an academic



Garfield, ca. 1923 SPSA 014-8



Garfield, 1965 SPSA 014-17

exchange program was initiated with a school in Braunschweig, Germany. Over the next ten years, students and teachers from these two schools participated in the exchange.

Garfield also earned a reputation for its superior music program. Its choral groups, marching band, and orchestra performed at many community events. Parker Cook, music teacher from 1928 until 1971, is honored in a mural in the school auditorium.

The school had long needed a new gymnasium and in 1962, a two-story detached facility was constructed on the northwest side of the site.

During the late 1960s, news stories circulated about racial tensions and violence at Garfield. By 1970, enrollment had plummeted to less than 1,000. A special Central Region within the school district was formed, led by an assistant school superintendent, with the intent of reestablishing quality education in troubled schools. This effort led to the 4-4-4 plan in the Central district when Garfield again became a four-year high school. Additional space was needed to establish a comprehensive program, and the former Washington Junior High School became part of Garfield, known as Garfield "B." This annex housed music, advanced science, industrial arts, home economics, and other career and vocational programs.

By 1974, enrollment had grown to about 1,050, and the community coined the slogans "Garfield has turned the corner" and "This is the year of the dog." New construction around the campus brought parks department facilities with Medgar Evans Swimming Pool adjacent to the school. In 1979, the APP Program for highly gifted students was placed at Garfield, initiating an academic surge with a college-oriented curriculum. The program required all 9th graders take math and science.

Today Garfield houses a science magnet program. A popular marine science class takes field trips to local beaches and faraway marine

environments in Australia, Florida, and Hawaii. The Engineering and Manufacturing Technology Lab prepares students for high technology employment. And for several years, Garfield has produced the highest number of National Merit Scholars of any high school in the region.

Garfield is also known for its award-winning concert band, jazz band, and orchestra, all of which perform at regional, national, and international venues. The jazz band received honorable mention at the Essentially Ellington competition held at Lincoln Center in May 2000. Garfield athletes are well known throughout the state. The boys' basketball team won the state 4-A tournament in 1998.

Garfield now has the largest enrollment of any high school in the district. The building is scheduled for a major renovation in the future.