

## McGilvra

|                |                                   |             |               |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Name:          | <b>McGilvra Elementary School</b> | Enrollment: | 234           |
| Address:       | 1617 38th Avenue E                | Nickname:   | Wildcats      |
| Configuration: | K-5                               | Colors:     | Red and white |



McGilvra, 2000 ©Mary Randlett SPSA 248-6

The area now known as Madison Park was originally developed by John J. McGilvra, who purchased 420 acres in 1864 and built his home there. McGilvra, for whom the permanent school would be named, had served for three years as U.S. Attorney for Washington Territory, an appointment made by President Abraham Lincoln. The two lawyers had worked in adjoining offices back in Illinois. Tired of the continual travel required in his government post, McGilvra picked the acreage bordering Lake Washington on which to settle. In order to connect his residence, known as Laurel Shade, with the village of Seattle, McGilvra built a rough wagon road parallel to what is Madison Street today. In 1891, the Madison Street Cable Railway opened, and McGilvra encouraged its extension by donating 21 acres for a terminal and recreation area, which became Madison Park.

The many new settlers attracted to McGilvra's neighborhood needed a place for their children to attend school. On December 2, 1891, the Seattle School Board authorized purchase of property in McGilvra's Second Addition, which McGilvra had platted along with several other real estate additions. Construction of the 2-room, wood pavilion did not begin until July 1899. Lake School opened with between 50 and 60 pupils and one head teacher. A third classroom was added to the initial two in 1911.

Within a few years, the small building was too crowded. The lower grades were taught in two sessions, with the second group attending class from noon until four o'clock. In the winter months, these students were dismissed at three o'clock because their parents worried about them walking home through the woods after dark.

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|------------|---------------------------------|
| Name:      | <b>Lake School</b>              |
| Location:  | 38th Avenue E and<br>E Garfield |
| Building:  | 2-room wood                     |
| Architect: | W.E. Boone                      |
| Site:      | 2.4 acres                       |

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| 1899: | Opened                           |
| 1902: | Became an annex to<br>Longfellow |
| 1913: | Closed                           |
| 1915: | Demolished                       |

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Name: **Lake School**  
Location: 1617 38th Avenue E  
Building: 9-classroom brick  
Architect: Edgar Blair  
Site: 2.15 acres

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1913: Opened as an annex to Longfellow  
1914: Renamed *J. J. McGilvra School* on April 25  
1940: Addition (Naramore & Brady)  
1972: Addition (Huggard & Associates)

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When Longfellow opened in 1902, Lake School became an annex under Longfellow's new principal, Annie Gifford. The head teacher at Lake was Eva M. Dansingburg, who later became principal of McGilvra, a position she held until 1933.

In 1913, a new brick building was constructed on the same site to accommodate the expanding needs of the neighborhood. The architecture is similar to Concord and McDonald, and all three were constructed to meet the district's new standards of fire safety. The utilitarian design represents a shift away from the more elaborately decorated schools built a few years earlier.

In its inaugural year, the Lake School housed approximately 150 pupils in grades 1–7. The name of the school was changed in 1914 to honor J. J. McGilvra. The school did not grow immediately. It wasn't until 1915–16 that a fifth classroom opened. McGilvra remained under the supervision of Longfellow's principal until 1918, when enrollment reached 246, and six classrooms were in use.

In 1940, an addition was constructed to accommodate the nearly 400 students attending McGilvra. The single-story brick wing added four classrooms on the north side of the building. The largest enrollment recorded was 511 students in 1952–53. Subsequently, enrollment dropped to 400 and then into the 300s by the mid-1960s.

Beginning in 1970, McGilvra housed grades 1–4 as part of the Central Area's 4-4-4 plan in which elementary, middle, and high schools each comprised four grades.

In 1972, a new gymnasium, considered the most modern in the district at that time, was constructed to the rear of the main building. A Learning Resources Center was created the same year by removing the walls between three classrooms and part of the hallway. The auditorium became a kindergarten, with the stage left intact for performances. During the desegregation plan of the late 1970s and 1980s, McGilvra remained K–5.



McGilvra, ca. 1960 SPSA 248-4



McGilvra, 1960 SPSA 248-1

An after-school tutoring program began in 1990 to assist children with their reading skills. Current programs include special education and English as a Second Language classes. The curriculum focuses on basic skills in language development and math, along with an extensive arts program. In 1999, McGilvra celebrated the 100th anniversary of the school site. An architectural drawing of the Lake School outhouse was framed and hung in the library.