

Day

Name: B. F. Day Elementary School	Enrollment: 397
Address: 3921 Linden Avenue N	Nickname: The Family School
Configuration: K-5	Colors: Aqua and tangerine



Day annex at former grocery store, with Day School in Inset, 1899. SPSA 218-1

Today B. F. Day has the distinction of being the oldest continually operating school in the Seattle School District No. 1. Before the permanent building was constructed, children in the Fremont area went to school in temporary sites established by Fremont School District No. 66.

The community of Fremont was named after the town of Fremont, Nebraska. The first Fremont School was opened in March 1889 by the Fremont School Board. Two classes were held at a house on 36th Avenue N and Whitman Street, reportedly owned by the Steele family or a Mrs. Gale. The site was last used in June 1889. The following year the school moved in order to expand. A store in the Nichols Building at 36th Avenue N and Aurora Avenue N provided space for three classrooms. This school opened in December 1889 when Fremont resident Benjamin Franklin Day paid for the first three months' rent. Classes ended there on May 2, 1891.

In June 1891, when Fremont was annexed into the City of Seattle, lumber mills and other industries lined the northwestern shores of Lake Union. Both railroad and steamer traffic converged at Fremont's doorstep. In order to accommodate the number of children in both Fremont and Edgewater, the Seattle School District rented the Good Templars Hall at 35th Avenue and Albion Place as a temporary site. Classes were held there from September 1891 to May 1892.

Details:

Name: **Day School**
Location: 3921 Linden Avenue N
Building: 8-room brick
Architect: John Parkinson
Site: 3.87 acres

1891: Named on July 18
1892: Opened on May 2; called B. F. Day School
1901: Addition (James Stephen)
1907: Site expanded to 5.1 acres
1916: Addition (Edgar Blair)
1981: 1982 and 1916 exteriors designated city landmark on April 8
1989-91: Closed for renovation
1991: Reopened (B.J.S.S. Group)
1992: Data technology additions
2008: Library upgrades
2017: Seismic updates

An end to this shuffling of school children from one site to another came in 1891 when Benjamin Franklin Day and his wife Francis R. Day donated a large section of land to the Seattle School District, contingent on the new building costing at least \$25,000. The Days owned a 160-acre farm on the hill above the developing community. The school board hired architect John Parkinson to design Fremont's new school. The main entrance of the two-story brick structure with Colonial Revival styling faced south. As a token of appreciation, the board named the new school Day School after the donors. The name was later shifted to B. F. Day School to avoid confusion that "Day" specified when class sessions were held.

The school opened when the principal, Professor Storey, marched the children over from their temporary locations. At the time, only four rooms on the first floor were finished. That first year, 185 children attended in grades 1-6. At the dedication ceremony, speakers spoke of the "wonderful growth of this suburb" and the responsibility of taxpayers to support education. Fremont residents could feel confident in the future because a new wooden trestle now linked their community with Queen Anne and the rest of the city.

When enrollment at the new school exceeded capacity in 1899, two annexes were established. First graders met downstairs at 3803 Aurora Avenue. Sixth graders attended classes in a building that had been the Cheadle's grocery. Meanwhile, architect James Stephen, fol-

lowing plans developed by John Parkinson, designed an eight-room addition for the north side of the school, yielding an H-shaped structure. The new main entrances were located on the east and west.



Day, ca. 1901 SPSA 218-25



Day, 1960 SPSA 218-38

The school again filled to capacity as enrollment reached 800 students by 1914-15. The next year additional north and south wings were added to the building. Each wing contained four classrooms, and a large assembly room was added. The resulting 24-classroom building was the largest grade school facility in Seattle. The already spacious grounds were expanded when the Seattle Parks Department acquired a playfield to the north of the building, and the school district purchased a playfield to the south.

For the next 20 years, Day's enrollment was consistently high, close to 1,000 students. By 1940, pre-vocational classes were added for boys. During World War II, boys at Day took Home Economics to train them for helping at home as many mothers were working in wartime industries. In September 1946, this Boys' Prevocational program moved from Day to Pacific.

In fall 1973, Day became the first home of the Gypsy Children's Program, a bilingual/bicultural program that stressed basic skills and cultural adjustment for Romani children ages 5-18 in grades K-8. Before this program, Romani children in traditional schools often felt academically bewildered and lonely in an educational environment that was alien to their lifestyle. Romani children benefitted from this program and, as a result, were more likely to stay in school. All of the children spoke English and their native Romanes. Books written in that language were used to bridge the gap between the American and Romani cultures. Social services, medical and dental screenings, hot lunches, and transportation were integral parts of the total program. The program moved to Bagley in 1975, where it stayed until the program closed in 1995.

The Orca alternative program moved to Day from Allen in September 1981 after Allen closed as a school. Orca's program integrated different ages and emphasized performing arts, fine arts, and environmental education, and served grades K-5. From 1978 to 1986, the regular program served K, 3-5 in a triad with Gatzert and Whittier as part of the district's desegregation plan.

In 1986, the school board decided to renovate the historic structure rather than tear it down. During the construction period, 1989-1991, B. F. Day students went to Old John Hay, an interim site, while the Orca program moved to Columbia. Restoration work on the 99-year-old building cost \$5 million and involved reinforcement of structural elements and new classroom equipment. The old gymnasium in the south basement was converted into a childcare center. The renovation included a new gym and a learning resource center. The playground was greatly

improved and modernized. When the school's librarian, who also served as the school's archivist, retired in 1994, a time capsule was placed in the attic.

Carole Williams, who served as principal from 1985 to 1998, was named Washington State Principal of the Year in 1994. Under her leadership, special programs in music and African studies were initiated. Also at this time, the school launched a program for homeless children in partnership with the Atlantic Street Center, which aided families with basic needs. In addition, a "School to Work" program brought students together with Fremont area businesses to learn more about the working world. In 1994, New York author Sharon Quint wrote a book about Carole's efforts titled *Schooling Homeless Children—A working Model for America's Public Schools*.

Williams' successor Susan McCloskey oversaw continued improvement at B. F. Day into the twenty-first century. After her work to improve student test scores earned B. F. Day the school district's distinction as a Blue Ribbon school in 1999, McCloskey focused her efforts on Day's library and reading programs. Her outstanding contributions to these programs earned her the John Stafford Outstanding Administrator Award from The Washington Library Media Association in 2003. Five years later, the district allocated \$620,000 to renovate the library.

Since the 2011-12 school year, efforts to improve the building and student performance have continued to the present day. During this time, B. F. Day implemented a social emotional program in 2013 called RULER designed to grow the emotional capacity of students, and in 2017 a four-year demonstration pre-school program designed to better prepare students for college, career, and life. These and other efforts earned B. F. Day the school of distinction award from the Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction in 2016 and 2017 for raising academic achievement.



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