

Fauntleroy



Fauntleroy, ca. 1940 SPSA 224-133

Fauntleroy Cove was named in 1857 by George Davidson, the leader of a U.S. Geodetic Survey party. He named it after his mentor and future father-in-law, Robert H. Fauntleroy. When Seattle businessman John F. Adams bought land there in 1903, he called it Fauntleroy Park and platted it through his Fauntleroy Land Company. Among his earliest buyers were a group of friends who were members of the Plymouth Congregational Church in downtown Seattle. They first visited the area aboard Lawrence Colman's yacht, and Colman himself purchased 17 acres for a summer home. This group forged a union between church and school that long shaped lives in the Fauntleroy community.

Fauntleroy School began with grades 1-3 in one of Adams's store-rooms. The student body included children from neighboring areas of West Seattle. Growth in the Fauntleroy district began in earnest with the completion of a streetcar line from Youngstown in February 1907. New homes and businesses sprouted up, and soon the area and school were annexed into Seattle.

After the first building burned in 1911, the school was relocated in two portables on the south side of Fauntleroy Creek, on property also owned by Adams "east of 44th, and along what became Brace Drive SW." This second Fauntleroy School, on the northeast corner of 45th Avenue SW and Wildwood Place, opened in 1911 for grades 1-4, while older children continued to attend Gatewood. The boys would spend their lunchtimes fishing in the creek. The ravine was beautiful, with mossy banks and full of flowers. Performances were held there, including folk dances using a wind-up phonograph. A place was cleared off on the other side of the creek and a platform erected for visitors.

Details:

Name: **Fauntleroy School**
 Location: NW corner Wildwood
 Place & 46th Avenue SW
 Building: Store

1906: Opened
 1908: Annexed into Seattle
 School District
 1909-10: Operated as annex
 to South Seattle
 1910-11: Operated as annex to Gatewood
 1911: Destroyed by fire before April

Details:

Name: **Fauntleroy School**
Location: 9131 California Avenue SW
Building: 6-room, 2-story brick
Architect: Edgar Blair
Site: 3.25 acres

1918: Opened February 22 as Gatewood
1919: Independent school in September
1950: Addition (George Wellington Stoddard)
1953: Addition (n.a.)
1981: Closed in June; leased in October
2007: Property classified as non-essential
2008 & 2010: Portions of property and the building sold
1981-present: Used for Fauntleroy Children's Center and other businesses

In April 1915, members of the community petitioned the school board to purchase a permanent site adjacent to the Congregational Church that was erected on land donated by Adams. Their intent was to situate the school near a gymnasium that church leaders had encouraged the community to build on church grounds. Attendance at Fauntleroy School rose 43 percent in fall 1915 and, the following May, the board purchased property from Adams across California Avenue from the church and gym.

Designed in the Jacobean style, the new school was smaller and more compact than other schools of that period. It opened in the middle of the year with the children from the portable school occupying just two rooms for the remainder of the year. Grades 4-7 were added in 1918-19 and the following year, with the addition of the 8th grade, Fauntleroy became an independent school. After school, most of the children walked across the street to the gymnasium. There they played or took part in manual training activities. This led many to attend the church's Sunday School.

As enrollment grew during the 1920s, the district chose not to add to the site but instead to build a new school between Fauntleroy and Gatewood (see Hughes). In fall 1929, the 7th and 8th grades were transferred to James Madison Junior High. This lowered enrollment at Fauntleroy to 189, well below the minimum of 280 required for a principal. The school operated under a head teacher until enrollment grew to 311 in 1942-43 when a portable was moved in from West Seattle High School. The principal position was reinstated in fall 1943.

On VE Day, the day World War II ended in Europe, the principal of the school marched the student body across the street to the old Fauntleroy Congregational Church sanctuary. The principal was also director of the YMCA branch, which had developed in the community gymnasium. There they talked, sang, and listened to his explanation about the day's significance before returning to school.

"Some say [the] Fauntleroy [neighborhood]'s golden years were the 1950s, when its post war population swelled and its church, YMCA and schoolhouse became a type of institutional triumvirate for the community." The postwar boom pushed Fauntleroy School's enrollment back over 400. It opened in fall 1950 after being completely remodeled and with a new addition containing five classrooms, an auditorium-lunchroom, and a playroom. The new north and south wings were blended to match the exterior of the original structure. That same year Arbor Heights opened as a K-4 annex of Fauntleroy.

By 1952, attendance at Fauntleroy had soared to 525. Off-site annexes were opened across the street at the Fauntleroy Congregational Church and the Fauntleroy Community Club, as the gymnasium was then called. These annexes were closed when four additional classrooms and a school gymnasium were opened in February 1953.

In 1978-79, under the district's desegregation plan, Fauntleroy formed a triad with Roxhill and Dunlap and changed from a K-6 to a K-3 configuration. Enrollment at Fauntleroy gradually declined from a high of 700 in 1954-55 to about 400 in 1972-73. In its final year of operation in 1980-81, enrollment dropped to 175.



Fauntleroy, 1960 SPSA 224-1a

After closing, the school district leased the building to the Fauntleroy Children's Center, a nonprofit daycare serving children ages one month to 12 years. After the district classified the property as non-essential surplus in 2007, Fauntleroy Community Services Agency (FCSA), the daycare's parent organization, used grant funding to purchase a portion of the property for \$1,825,000 in 2008. This portion included the building, the area immediately around it, the lower-terrace parking lot, and 10,000 square feet of the existing playground. FCSA purchased additional property for \$1 million in 2010. At present, the daycare serves up to 135 children and shares the building with "Dance! West Seattle," the Hall at Fauntleroy, and several other small community businesses. The only portion of the original Fauntleroy school site that remains a part of the district is a row of nine vacant single-family zoned lots on the west side of the property that measure approximately 1.4 acres in sum.