

Maple Leaf



Maple Leaf, 1958 SPSA 253-69

The first Maple Leaf School stood near the La Villa Station on the Seattle, Lake Shore & Eastern Railway (SLS&E), the present-day Burke Gilman Trail. It had been built as a bunkhouse for workers at the sawmill on Lake Washington, near what is now Matthews Beach. The school got its name from the large number of maple trees in the area; it was not named after the Maple Leaf community.

Howard Hanson was the first teacher and earned a salary of \$40 a month. His pupils were three children from the Ohland family and three from the Fischer family. The Fischers' father, August, kept a sturdy team of horses and supplied the school with wood for its potbelly stove. At the time, the railroad attracted homeless men who often spent the night in the schoolhouse. The small wood building burned down sometime before 1910. The children were transported by wagon to Yesler School until a second and larger Maple Leaf was built two miles to the north and east at NE 105th Street and 35th Avenue NE.

When the school population outgrew the second Maple Leaf school in the 1920s, a new site was purchased by Maple Leaf School District No. 164 five blocks to the southwest at NE 100th Street and 32nd Avenue NE. The land for the third Maple Leaf School was acquired in the Meadowbrook community from August and Wilhemina Fischer, who included a special clause in the 1925 deed to allow them to continue watering their livestock at

Details:

Name: **Maple Leaf School**
 Location: Near NE 98th Street
 and 49th Avenue NE
 Building: Frame

1896: Opened
 1910: Destroyed by fire

Details:

Name: **Maple Leaf School**
Location: S.E. corner of NE 105th
and 35th Avenue NE
Building: 4-room frame

1910: New building opened
1926: Closed
n.a.: Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall/
Maple Leaf Community Club
1952: Sold and demolished

a spring on what later became the school's lower field. The second Maple Leaf school building from 1910 was purchased by the Veterans of Foreign Wars and was used as a community clubhouse until it was sold and demolished in 1952.

The first addition to Maple Leaf was a gymnasium that opened in 1930. Because the north side of the school grounds was unsuitable for a playground, a lot across the street became a play area. A new and improved playground to the east was cleared and graded in 1937. Many of the shrubs and flowers that surrounded the building were donated by the Nishitani family, who operated a greenhouse and nursery near what is now NE 98th Street and Lake City Way NE.

By 1935, Maple Leaf was short of classrooms as a result of increased enrollment. The lunchroom, located at the north end of the 1926 structure, was converted into two classrooms and was also used to hold assemblies. At a temporary lunchroom (possibly in a portable), sponsored and operated by the PTA, lunches sold for 15 cents each.

During the 1937-38 year, 380 pupils packed a school designed to accommodate 350. A campaign for a new lunchroom brought in federal support as a Works Progress Administration project. The new wing, completed in 1940, included 10 classrooms as well as a new lunchroom.

Maple Leaf became part of Shoreline School District No. 412 in 1944. In 1952, the residents of the Maple Leaf area voted for annexation to the City of Seattle, and the school became part of the Seattle School District the following year. With the 1950s came tremendous growth in district enrollment, and Maple Leaf was no exception. Matthews School (later Rogers) was opened in 1953 as an annex to Maple Leaf to relieve overcrowding. The peak enrollment of 909 at Maple Leaf came in 1954-55.



Maple Leaf, 1955 SPSA 253-46

Victory Heights, a new all-portable school, was scheduled to open in October 1955 for over 200 north-end children who had been attending University Heights. When a problem with sewer connections delayed the opening, the Victory Heights pupils were placed in four existing portables at Maple Leaf. When Victory Heights (later Sacajawea) finally opened, it did so as an annex to Maple Leaf.

In 1965-66, 637 students attended Maple Leaf. By 1979, enrollment dropped to 203, following a district-wide trend. Although the teachers, parents, and students maintained a strong sense of community, the district determined that the costs of operating such a small school necessitated its closure in June 1979. Most of the students transferred to

Details:

Name: **Maple Leaf School**
 Location: NE 100th and 32nd Avenue NE
 Building: 8-room brick veneer exterior
 and wood interior
 Architect: William Mallis
 Site: 5.76 acres

1926: Opened by Maple Leaf District
 1930: Addition (Mallis)
 1940: Addition
 1944: Formed part of new
 Shoreline School District
 1953: Annexed into Seattle School
 District on March 1
 1979: Closed in June
 1979-87: Leased to Renton Technical
 Vocational Institute
 1986: Lower field sold for
 single-family housing
 1990: School building demolished
 2005: Remaining site sold for
 single-family housing

Rogers for the following year. During its entire time as a Seattle public school, Maple Leaf had been a K-6 grade school.

In August 1979, Maple Leaf's classrooms were leased to the Renton Technical Vocational Institute for instructional space. Approximately half of the site was put up for sale in 1984 and sold to a contractor for housing construction in 1986.

The school building was demolished in 1990. The brass block "Maple Leaf School" letters from the addition to the school were preserved. The letters were considered a center point of the neighborhood. They were saved by neighbors and given to historian Valarie Bunn during her work gathering the stories of the Meadowbrook neighborhood. She shared the letters for display, and they remain at the Meadowbrook Community Center along with the Meadowbrook history book.

Neighbors hoped the remaining Maple Leaf site that had been unoccupied for nearly 20 years would be used for a local park, but the city determined in May 2003 that creating a park there was not a high priority given limited resources and the need for park space in other parts of Seattle. That November, Superintendent Raj Manhas moved for the School Board to authorize a purchase and sale agreement for the Maple Leaf site, which had been declared surplus, to Steve Williams Custom Homes, following the request for proposal process. Several homes were built on the site in 2005.