

Minor

Name: Seattle World School at T. T. Minor	Enrollment: 277
Address: 1700 E Union Street	Nickname:
Configuration: 6-12	Colors:



Minor, ca. 1905 SPSA 254-145

Details:

Name: **T. T. Minor School**
 Location: E Union and 18th Avenue
 Building: 2-story wood frame with basement
 Architect: Saunders & Houghton
 Site: 2.11 acres

1890: Named on July 21; opened on September 17
 1894: Addition (n.a.)
 1900: Addition (Josenhaus & Allen)
 1940: Closed and Demolished

One of the temporary sites that served as an early school east of downtown was the Methodist chapel at 23rd Avenue and Madison Street. The Seattle School District rented a room there in 1888 so younger children of the area wouldn't have to walk all the way to Central II. The first year, classes at Madison Street School started in October with Ida Hughes teaching all of the children. The following year Adeline Pollack joined her and taught the intermediate grades. In 1889-90 there were 111 students in grades 1-8. Enrollment was especially high that year because a fire had destroyed Central II the previous April. The Madison cable car was built out in early 1890 and right away, people began building homes, which increased enrollment and resulted in the need for schools.

At school board meetings held in August 1889, members discussed the construction of four new schools, one of which would

be built in the Renton Addition on Capitol Hill. Enough land was purchased on October 18, 1889, to make a complete block. Architect Charles W. Saunders drew up plans for all four buildings, each of which would have two stories with four rooms on each floor and a large basement. The bids were not opened until October, and it was decided that it was too late in the year to begin construction. A temporary “relief school” was erected on the new site at 18th Avenue and E Union Street. It opened on February 10, 1890, and was used for the remainder of the school year.

As plans were being finalized, a tragic accident took the life of one of the Seattle School Board’s most prominent members, Thomas Taylor Minor. He was born of missionary parents in Sri Lanka (then called Ceylon) on February 14, 1844. After serving as a surgeon in the Civil War, Minor came to Port Townsend, where he was mayor from 1880 to 1882. In 1883, he and his wife moved to Seattle, where he took a leading role in community affairs. Minor served as mayor of Seattle from 1886 to 1888. On the way back from a hunting trip on Whidbey Island, Dr. Minor’s canoe tipped over in a squall and all occupants drowned. The board voted to name the new school in the Renton Addition after Minor, and his widow requested that the school’s name include his initials.

T. T. Minor School opened with over 200 students in grades 1-6 in 1890. The handsome Colonial Revival building had center gables on each side and a classical front porch with white columns. The students came from a large area, which extended from Broadway all the way to Lake Washington. This draw area was later divided up when schools such as Randell (see Madrona) and Lake (see McGilvra) opened.

Overcrowding was eased in 1894 with the addition of four rooms to the east side of the building, and in 1900 with another four rooms to the west. By 1901-02, 838 students were enrolled at T. T. Minor. The Minor Annex operated briefly at 1404 Pike Street with a single classroom for students in grades 1-2 to provide some relief. A second annex opened in 1901 (see Mann).

In 1921, the School for the Deaf was transferred to Minor from Washington, necessitating the addition of portables on the playground south of the building.

The celebration of the school’s 50th birthday coincided with a decision to replace the building with a new modern structure. A special levy, which remarkably passed in 1939 during the Depression, provided funds for replacing and adding space to several schools. During construction, the walls of the new building rose around the old structure in the shape of a U. The program for deaf students was divided and moved to Summit, Longfel-

Details:

Name: **T. T. Minor School**

Location: 1700 E Union Street

Building: 1-story brick veneer and concrete

Architect: Naramore & Brady

Site: 2.11 acres

1941: Opened on September 4

1960: Addition, classrooms and gymnasium (Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johnson)

1961: Site expanded to 3.5 acres

2009: School closed

2009-15: Building leased by Hamlin Robinson School

2015: Building closed for construction.

2016: Building reopened; Renovation and addition (TCF Architecture; BEX IV); Seattle World School relocated to Minor from Meany



Minor, 1965 SPSA 254-18



Minor, ca. 1955 SPSA 254-20

low, and Marshall. The day before school closed in June was moving day—younger children took up armfuls of books, while the older boys carried boxes of supplies and the march to the new building began.

The new T. T. Minor School was considered a model for the future. It was constructed in a single story of brick veneer and concrete with light airy classrooms and decorative stonework. Newspaper articles described the building as “streamlined,” and it was reported that over 70 students from neighboring districts wanted to attend but had been turned away. “Our school is just too attractive,” said Principal R. J. Knutson. With 10 classrooms, a kindergarten room, large assembly-lunchroom, and covered play courts, the building’s capacity was 420 pupils.

During the 1940s, when at least two other public schools opened their doors for evening classes, Minor was used for teaching English and citizenship to the foreign born.

In 1957, Principal Thomas Leist reported to the school board on the crowded conditions at his school. Nine portables were in use, and enrollment had increased from 294 in 1945 to 737 in October 1956. In fall 1960, an addition consisting of several classrooms and a gymnasium was completed. The following year the district purchased the half-block west of the school, adding playground space. In 1979, the district leased some of the school property to the Seattle Parks Department for the T. T. Minor Playground, which is used jointly by the school and the community. It was a significant investment by the parks department for the benefit of the school and community.

A program launched in 1966 that brought change to Minor. A new instructional materials center and an audio-visual center were introduced, and three areas were remodeled to accommodate team teaching. Student progress was tracked by level of achievement, rather than by traditional grades.

Affected by redlining in the City of Seattle, the student population was 92 percent African American prior to the district’s voluntary racial transfer program in the 1970s. In 1970, a reorganization of schools in the city’s Central Area called the 4-4-4 plan began. Elementary, middle, and high schools each had four grade levels; thus Minor became a K-4 school. Under the district’s 1978 desegregation plan, called the Seattle Plan, Minor was paired with Bryant (K-2) and housed K, 3-5 from 1978-88.

Seattle businessman Stuart Sloan, the majority owner of University Village, pledged to donate \$1 million annually to T. T. Minor in an agreement with the district and Superintendent John Stanford. The program was implemented in 1998, and test scores began to improve after Gloria Mitchell was named principal in 2001. The



Minor, 2016 ©Pete Eckert SPSA 254-335

money, planned for at least eight years, funded the Enhanced Program, which reduced class size to 20, funded before- and after-school programs, provided healthcare and meals, a free pre-kindergarten program, teaching assistants, and other services for students. Sloan's funding was the biggest grant ever to a single Seattle school, and *The Seattle Times* reported it was believed to be the largest gift to a single U.S. public school.

By 2006, when enrollment numbers were falling district-wide, preliminary recommendations were made for school closures. T. T. Minor became the most likely candidate in the Central area. Academic performance that still struggled, smaller school capacity, and poor building conditions were the factors that influenced the recommendation. Three years later, the school closed in 2009 as part of district-wide cuts and the school was leased to the Hamlin Robinson School, a nonprofit that worked with students with dyslexia and other language-related difficulties.

That same year, the school board approved the creation of what became the Seattle World School to support language and academic development following the newcomer experience in Seattle Public Schools. The Seattle World School's secondary school program (ages 11-20) evolved from the Secondary Bilingual Orientation Center, which opened in 1980 at the original John Hay School building (see Queen Anne Elementary), where it resided until 2009. In 2009, the renamed program was relocated to Meany. While the program was located at Meany, it attained high school accreditation from the State of Washington and graduated its first class in 2015. The program moved to Minor in 2016.

The renovation at T. T. Minor, which began in summer 2015, expanded the school to 53,000 square feet with a total capacity for 360 students. The renovation involved reconfiguring classrooms and other spaces to support a high school program. The addition included the commons, kitchen and stage, and additional program space. The school had two main entrances: one for the reception area and one for the community health clinic run in partnership with the City of Seattle. The building was decorated with a display of international flags, an inlaid world map, patterns inspired by textiles from around the globe, and iconography to help students identify with the school. Designed with a new simplified style that acknowledged its original construction, the building also served as a community gathering space and provided a network of services from nonprofits and volunteer organizations.

On Sept. 2, 2016, Seattle World School at T. T. Minor had its official ribbon-cutting celebration with remarks from principal Dr. Concie Pedroza, Superintendent Dr. Larry Nyland, State Senator Pramila Jayapal, and Speaker of the House Frank Chopp, among others.