

Minor

Name:	T.T. Minor Elementary School	Enrollment:	217
Address:	1700 E Union Street	Nickname:	Bull Pups
Configuration:	K-5	Colors:	Purple

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. Classroom space was especially scarce that year because a fire had destroyed Central II the previous April.

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. 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 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 name include his initials.

T.T. Minor School opened with over 200 students in grades 1-6. 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 Randall (later Madrona) and Lake (later 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 Minor. Also, the Minor Annex operated briefly at 1404 Pike Street with a single classroom for students in grades 1-2. A second annex, which opened in 1901, became Walla Walla (later 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

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



Minor, ca. 1905 SPSA 254-145

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 an L. The program for deaf students was divided and moved to Summit, Longfellow, and Marshall.

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 decorations of stone and native cedar. Newspaper articles described the building as “streamlined” and reported that over 700 students from neighboring districts wanted to attend but had been turned away. “Our school is just too attractive,” said Principal R.J. Knutson, because it was the first of its kind to be built in Seattle. With ten classrooms, a kindergarten room, large assembly-lunchroom, and covered playcourts, 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 valuable playground space.

A program launched in 1966 brought a change to non-graded instruction, the introduction of a new instructional materials center and audio-visual center, and the remodeling of three areas for team teaching. Student progress was tracked by level of achievement, rather than by traditional grades.



Minor, 1965 SPSA 254-18

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 (Naramore, Bain,
 Brady & Johnson)
 1961: Site expanded to 3.5 acres

The student population was 92 percent African-American prior to the district's voluntary racial transfer program. 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. From 1978 to 1988, Minor was paired with Bryant (K-2) and housed K, 3-5.

Beginning in September 1998, Minor has been home to an experiment launched by philanthropist Stuart Sloan, who owns several successful businesses in Seattle. Under an agreement worked out with school district officials, Sloan pledged to give the struggling inner city school \$1 million a year for at least eight years. The bequest allows the school to add staff and thereby reduce class sizes, provide access to health care and other needed services, and institute a year-round, extended-day schedule. Called the Enhanced Program, it began with the pre-K and kindergarten classes, each of which have 20 or less students per class. The children attend school from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. and receive two meals plus a snack. Each year the program will add an additional grade, starting with the first grade and going up. A new curriculum encourages child-directed activities and pays close attention to all of the children's needs. Staff, parents, and community members are optimistic about the future of the school.



Minor, ca. 1955 SPSA 254-20