

# Honoring our Grant Grade School Teachers

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The story of Grant Grade School begins in 1898 when the Spokane School Board decided that a new school was needed in the Liberty Park area. It would be the 15<sup>th</sup> grade school to be built in Spokane.

Grant Grade School, in 113 years of history, has had many wonderful, creative and challenging teachers that we now take time to remember. We appreciate every teacher who walked through these doors to be our teachers. We are also grateful for the teachers today who teach in what we call the “new” Grant Elementary School which was built in 1980.

On September 8, 1899, old Grant Grade School wasn't ready for students, so they started the fall schedule at the old Lincoln Grade School near to where St. Luke's Hospital is today at 5th and Cowley. After the first week, on September 16<sup>th</sup>, Grades 1 - 5 walked from Lincoln Grade School to the new Grant Grade School at 10<sup>th</sup> and Ivory where only two rooms on the first floor were ready for 118 students, 50 and 68 in two rooms. The basement was not finished yet. On October 19, 1899, the Spokane School Board took bids to finish the two rooms in the basement.

The first teachers at Grant Grade School, in 1899 and 1900, according to the Spokesman-Review (S-R):

September 8, 1899 (S-R)

Emily L. Hard, Principal and grade 5  
Martha Corner  
Myrtle Nosler  
Edith Spees

August 31, 1900 (S-R)

Emily L. Hard, Principal and grades 5 and 6  
Josco N. McHugh – 3-4  
Myrtle Nosler – 2-3  
Bessie Startsman – 1-2  
Laura E. Green – 1

In 1908 Mrs. Wilson taught Grade 5

The basement rooms and first floor were finished and in 1906 the second floor was added. The school continued to grow and in 1910 the west two floors and basement were added. That was the school that many of us remember. Later on two portables were added to the west side.

At the downtown Spokane library in the Northwest Room, they have small booklets which list the teaching staff for many of the years from 1913 to 1964 for District 81 (Spokane School District). We have assembled a list of the Grant Grade School teachers and staff from this resource. We do not have every year, but this document is available for the asking. Here is the first list from 1913-14:

**GRANT SCHOOL.**  
 Ninth Avenue and Ivory Street. Hi. 199.  
 Liberty Park car (Water Power)—To Ivory Street, 2 blocks south.  
 Altmaont car (Traction)—To Ivory Street.

|                           |                                  |            |           |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Mrs. Emily L. Hard.....   | Greenacres .....                 | Or. 39-J-4 | Principal |
| Mrs. Kate P. Thacher..... | East 1728 Mission Avenue.....    | M. 4845    | 8th       |
| Myrtle B. Morrison.....   | San Gabriel .....                | Rv. 27     | 7th       |
| Madge L. Davidson.....    | Hotel Parsons .....              | M. 3863    | 7B, 6A    |
| Mrs. Della Galey.....     | 1301 Newark Avenue.....          | Hi. 681-R  | 6B        |
| Helen Wright .....        | San Gabriel .....                | Rv. 27     | 5th       |
| Mrs. Bernice Belden.....  | 563 Arthur Street.....           | Hi. 709-R  | 5B        |
| Lucile Davis .....        | 1210 Adams Street.....           | M. 2097-J  | 4A        |
| Florence Wyant .....      | Parsons Hotel .....              | M. 3863    | 4B        |
| Abigail Spiger .....      | East 320 Nineteenth Avenue.....  | Rv. 1901-Y | 3A        |
| Alice Campbell .....      | East 1326 Newark Avenue.....     |            | 3B        |
| Mabel Reed .....          | East 1923 Twelfth Avenue.....    | Hi. 457-Y  | 3B, 2A    |
| Lena A. Gordon .....      | Hotel Parsons .....              | M. 3863    | 1st       |
| Emily L. Motie.....       | 614 Thirteenth Avenue.....       | Rv. 762    | 1st       |
| Grace Griffin .....       | Parsons Hotel .....              | M. 3863    | 1B        |
| George W. Savage.....     | East 1003 Thirteenth Avenue..... | Hi. 519-R  | Janitor   |

Please note: Even their home addresses are printed here.



In 1913 MABEL REED was the first teacher mentioned that many of us had as a teacher. Mabel Reed taught at Grant from 1913-14 and retired in 1948 having taught grades 3B, 2A and 2 for 35 years. In Grade 2 she taught us about birds and each student chose a bird to study and report on, like the Downy Woodpecker, Catbird, Ruby-Throated Hummingbird, etc. A Grant alumnus shared that in the late 1930's the depression was still affecting life and several children came to Grant School barefoot. Mabel Reed took her own money and bought shoes for the children in need. In the summer of 1945 she took a trip to Mexico and when school started in September she had a gift from Mexico for each second grader.



OLIVE McEACHRAN - 1B, 2B, 1A, 1, 2. 1917-1953. When Helen Erickson Fogelquist began first grade in 1917-18 at Grant her teacher was Olive McEachran. She taught at Grant for 36 years.



VERA HENDERSON – 4B, 3A and 3. 1919-1957. She challenged us to read books and this she emphasized throughout the entire school year. Many books were in her classroom library. One alumnus remembers that a classmate who read 85 books was given a book by Vera Henderson in recognition of what he had accomplished. One special interest that Vera Henderson had was to learn the Japanese language. Before we had an ESL (English as a second language) teacher, Vera Henderson did that work. She assisted many Japanese students that came to Grant to learn the English language since she knew their Japanese language. She taught at Grant for 38 years.

AGNES DEMPSEY – 5A, 4B, 4. 1920-1953. Agnes Dempsey taught us cursive writing using the large muscle in our lower arm to write the push/pulls or up/down and the ovals or circles. She had a bullying situation that arose in her classroom one time that she handled very strongly and directly and it was never a problem again. She taught at Grant 33 years.



OLIVE BENNISON was the 7<sup>th</sup> grade teacher in 1924-25 and was also the coach of the Grant baseball team that played for the Spokane Grade School Baseball championships against Bancroft Grade School at Natatorium Park Baseball Field in 1926. Grant won the game. She taught at Grant from 1924-30 teaching 7A and 7B; then she left from 1930-1938 to work for the Washington Education Association and traveled around the state of Washington helping teachers and grade schools in their educational programs. She returned to Grant in 1938 and taught until 1964 when she retired. She taught 8B and 8A and 8 during these years and was the 8<sup>th</sup> grade teacher for many of us. She retired after 40 years of teaching. In her retirement at Riverview Retirement Center, she continued teaching with a reading club for children. She would read them a story or the students would read to her.

MRS. BRIGHTY –1924 – 6

ESTELLE OWENS – 1929-1945 – 1B



EVELYN McCRAY – 1936-1958. Music, Girls PE, Library. Remember the Christmas programs with carols, singing and chimes created with a large or small crow bar hanging from a doorway and a hammer that she taught the person to hit the crow bars at the appropriate time to make the chimes ring. One spring we sang the cantata, *The Childhood of Hiawatha*, and our parents

and families gathered in our auditorium, which was the second floor hallway, to hear our presentation. Evelyn McCray taught us a lot of music through the music we would hear from her room that went through the school—a variety of different kinds of music. Evelyn McCray taught at Grant for 22 years.

In 1938,

GAIL JOHNSON:

HAYDEE HOOD:

H. P. ALDRICH.

RUTH WOODARD – 1941-44 – Kindergarten. First kindergarten teacher at Grant Grade School.

ELIZABETH KELLY – K - 1945

In 1945,

CATHERINE BERGMARK ;

EVELYN COLWELL;

JOSEPHINE JONES;

ALMA LINDAHL;

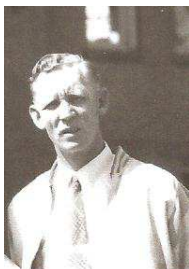
DONALD McDAVIS;

GLADYS STONE.

MARGARET TOLLACKSON – 5 - 1950



MARYLEE HOEFEL – 1947-49. – 5 - First teacher that many of us had that did not have white, grey or blue hair.



ARNOLD HAGEN – 1947-60. 7, Sport coach: football, basketball, softball and track. PE instructor and during the winter, since we had no gymnasium, he took us to the basement where there were tumbling mats, a rope on which to climb to the ceiling and boxing.



HELEN LOWRY HOLTEN – 1 - 1947-1954



EVA PAYNE – 7 – 1948 - 1949



RUTH DAWSON - 4 - 1948 -1953



MRS. BICE - 1 - 1948



MINNIE LOUTHAN – 2 - 1949-1960



BESSIE TROYER – 5 – 1950-1960



ELIZABETH FARBRO - 7 – 1949-52

In 1952 six classrooms were added to the school on the west side and connected with a hallway and step(s) to first floor. Also a multipurpose room (gymnasium), kitchen, art room and offices were added to the southeast side and a hallway to the Ivory entrance to Grant School. Our school was growing.



EARL BLUMHAGEN – 7 – 1952

BILLIE STANTON – 1 – 1954



MRS. WILLIAMS – 4 – 1954



REBECCA COOKE – 6 – 1952 – 1959



RONAL CHATTIN (Student teacher) – 6 – 1959

CHRISTINE VOSEN – 1-4 – 1959



DONALD PICKEREL – 6 – 1955



G. JOANNE HOFF – 8 - 1954



OLIVE LYNCH – 5 – 1954



HELEN JEAN HOWLETT – 4 – 1955



MINNIE BAEDER – 3 – 1956



DOROTHY WOLF – 3 - 1957



KEN STROH – 8 – 1957 – 1964



HAZEL HAYNES – 4 – 1957





FRANCES ELSOM - 4 – 1958



MARY KENT LEE – 5 – 1958



PAULINE ROBB – 3, 4, 5. 1958-1984 (26 years). She taught in the old building and the new building. Pauline met Mr. Walter Davis, an insurance agent for the Hartford Insurance Company. He told her that he had “fire safety” calendars that he was willing to give to her students in her class. Pauline suggested that her students learn to spell the days of the week, the months of the year, and recite the rhyme “Thirty Days has September” and then they would receive from Mr. Davis one of these “fire safety” calendars. The children were excited about the task and we have now five three-ring notebooks containing thank you notes from the children who had received a “fire safety” calendar from Mr. Davis from 1973-77. These thank you notes were given to us by Mrs. Davis for our historical records.



EDNA JOHNSON – 4 - 1960



DONALD PEARSON – 7 – 1960

Expansions to the building continued in 1960 with four rooms added to the north side of the school. In 1980 the old school building was torn down and the new Grant Elementary was built on the old football and baseball field and park. So, we have a new park today.





GLENN CLARK – 8 – 1960 – 1961



GLORIA NELSON – 5 – 1961



GORDON ERICKSON – 7 – 1961



CARL SCHULTZ – 8 - 1962



MARIE COURCHAÎNE – 3, 4, 5, 6. 1969-2006 (37 years). She taught in the old school and the new school.

In 1950 there was one 8<sup>th</sup> grade teacher. In 1960 there were three 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers. Grant School grew. Many more teachers came to teach, lead, inspire and challenge students. There were also several principals who gave leadership and direction to the staff. We recognize the office staff that was so important to our school. After the multipurpose (gymnasium) room was built, there were the cooks and staff to serve food. We do not forget the custodial staff who kept the school clean and warm. Then today, we take time to honor our teachers in appreciation for all they did for us. WHICH TEACHERS DO YOU REMEMBER? WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT THEM? Make a list, share your thoughts and memories with Jim. What will you add to this article? Which teacher(s) touched you in a special, specific way? Send your thoughts by mail to Jim Nyborg at 1819 S. Airpark Drive, Spokane Valley, WA 99037 or via e-mail at [bailnybo@msn.com](mailto:bailnybo@msn.com).

For 13 years the Grant Grade School Alumni have met three times a year—April, July and October. Early on we learned that many of the records from District 81, Spokane School District, which includes Grant Grade School, were destroyed in a fire in downtown Spokane in the 1960's. In these 13 years we have collected 20 three-ring notebooks filled with over 220 8X10" pictures. There are also many smaller pictures. These pictures are class pictures with or without teachers and with or without names included, with a typed page on the back side with names of students and faculty. In addition we have compiled 43 pages of names of students by class who attended Grant. This list is changed as more information becomes known. This list is available on request.

We are looking for more class pictures to fill out our pictorial history. We now are looking for pictures from 1970 and after. In 1972 Grant Grade School changed from a K-8 to a K-6 program.

We appreciate the teachers and staff in the school today and the history that is carried on each year.

*Thank you teachers for all you did for us!*