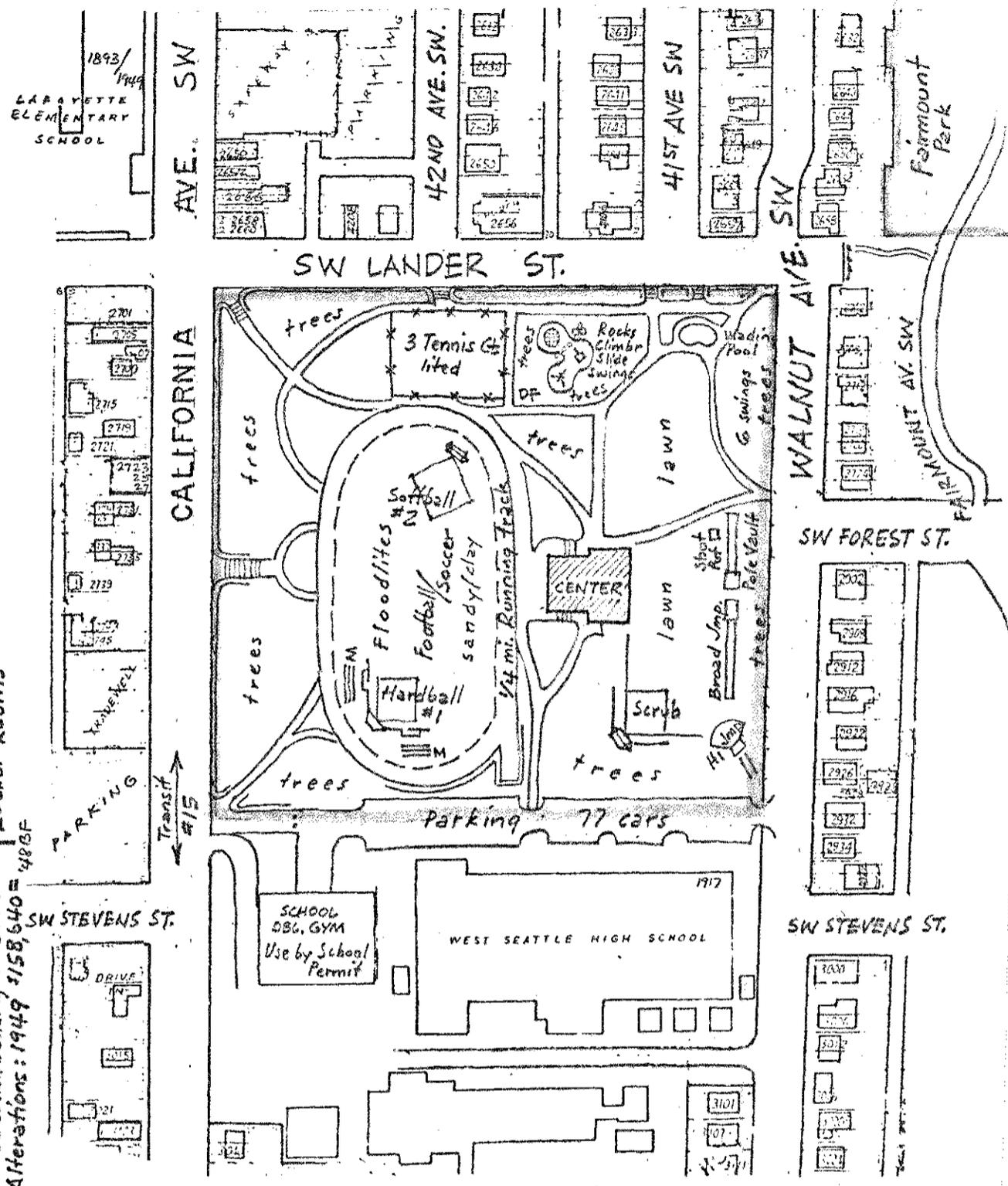


HIAWATHA: Mohawk Indian Chief / 16th C. // Polm by H.W. Longfellow (1807-1882)
 Lander St: named for Judge Edw. Lander: contributed land for U.W., volunteer capt. during Indian war and first Chief Justice of Washington.
 Stevens St: named for Territorial Governor, Isaac W. Stevens.
 Lafayette School: named for Fr. General-Statesman (1757-1834)

Ballfield sites 1954: \$13,635 =
 Rehab. 1967: \$5,006 =
 T.C. sites 1962: \$7,696 =

Gym: 98' x 58' = 812 persons
 Auditorium: 39' x 63' = 500 Stage
 Game Rm: 13' x 25'
 Game Rm (off lobby): 13' x 20'
 Locker Rooms

Recreation Center
 2700 California Ave SW
 935-3294
 Built: 1911 \$15,000 = 10 BF
 first public recreation building in Seattle
 Gym plus Alterations: 1949 \$158,640 = 48 BF



11.9 Acres
 Purch. 1910 (470,374 = '08 BF)
 935-2520 / Distr. Foreman
HIAWATHA P.F.

040973

HISTORY: HIAWATHA PLAYFIELD

"A new era in public recreation in Seattle and in the Pacific Northwest was opened with the dedication of the recreation center on Hiawatha Playfield" in 1911. (A second center was completed that same year at Ballard Playfield; then Collins in 1912 and South Park in 1913.) The Olmsted Bros. of Mass. prepared the original design in 1911 for what was then the largest public playfield in Seattle. The Olmsted Plan was drastically altered in 1932 when the demand for a longer running track caused its relocation from the east side of the center to the west and a continual redesign of the eastern half of the playfield.

Originally identified as the "West Seattle Playfield" in the newly annexed West Seattle (1907), it was named in time for the dedication, upon proposal of Park Commissioner Ferdinand Schmitz, to honor the hero of a poem by Longfellow: HIAWATHA. The 16th Century Mohawk Chieftan, who was famed for his miraculous powers and deeds, brought about the Five National Confederation of Indians known as the League of Iroquois. Hiawatha lived and roamed through the forests of Northern Michigan.

The developers of West Seattle hoped that this area would become to Seattle as Oakland is to San Francisco, and began with "Luna (Amusement) Park" out at Duwamish Head beach, complete with ferry service from Seattle, met with a cable car, up to the hill to all the real estate for sale. The cable car and ferry were replaced with a trolley car all the way from Seattle and it ran along California Avenue (named for the dream) right past the new playfield and recreation center.

The original center included clubrooms and large social room, put to full use by community and adjacent Lafayette School, which at that time included elementary and high school age students; gym classes used the playfield and social room; school dances used the center. Realty sales boomed and soon the school grounds were covered with portables and the School Board developed plans for a separate facility for the high school level, to be located on the semi-cleared area south of the playfield. Close cooperation had developed between the school and the center staff (through Frank Fuller, Assistant Superintendent in charge of Recreation) so that a plan for the use of the Social Room as a gym for the new high school during school hours was developed in 1916. The demand for gym space and facility soon outgrew the small Social Room and requests for the addition of a new full size gym at the center were voiced by 1929; the proposal was considered by the Park Board but the Great Depression demanded greater consideration. A WPA project accomplished small jobs, including relocation of the track. The clamor for a new gym resumed in 1927, but then came WW II and the War Department took over a portion of the area; officers were quartered in the center and troops quartered in 28 tents on the lawn area. Settlement of claims for damages and alterations were completed, after a lengthy argument, in 1946. Plans were then prepared for the remodeling of the center and the addition of a gym, but the low bid exceeded the budgeted funds, so the project was included in the voter approved 1948 bond issue and the "new" center was rededicated in 1949 to a most appreciative community. (Meanwhile, the high school expanded and in 1960 added a double gym to the school.) The ballfield was floodlighted in 1954, rehabilitated in 1967; the tennis courts lighted; a new wading pool replaced the old ones; new types of play equipment replaced traditional types. The ballfields installed in 1954 developed drainage problems in winter and "paved" surface in summer; it was re-surfaced in 1967 with the assistance of the SeaBee unit from Sand Point Naval Station.