



## TRUDEAU ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

*Continuing our review of schools that  
fed into Marshall we find Trudeau  
Elementary.*

Trudeau was located on the corner of 4<sup>th</sup> Street and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Southeast. The school, opened in 1872, was originally called Thomas Arnold. It was renamed

in 1913 in honor of Dr. Edward Livingston Trudeau, who established the first U.S. sanatorium for tuberculosis patients. The school was run cooperatively by Minneapolis Public Schools and various health organizations. Trudeau was a “fresh-air school” where students who had “tubercular tendencies” studied in the dead of winter in classrooms with wide-open windows. The fresh air was healthy.

In the 1920s Minneapolis Schools took over completely and the emphasis shifted to students who had problems gaining weight and/or had low vitality. School nurses from throughout the city sent underweight students to Trudeau to make them healthy. Many, probably most, students commuted by streetcar.

Trudeau enrolled about 100 students in grades three through eight. Nurses and doctors regularly checked student’s health and often students transferred out after six months while some stayed until high school.

There was no gym or art class, but there was a lot of singing and eating. One line of their school song was “Oh me, oh my, we’ll get there by and by...” “Getting there” meant getting well enough to go to a regular school.

At the height of the Depression, students had oatmeal and juice for breakfast and a hot drink or juice at midmorning. Lunch was soup or salad, followed by a main course such as macaroni and cheese or meatloaf and potatoes, followed by a dessert of cherry cobbler, prune whip, fruit, pie or cake. Whole wheat bread was served and seconds were encouraged. After lunch, most of the students lined up for a ‘shot’ glass of cod-liver oil, followed by an orange slice. Then it was nap time and all students were expected to nap for one hour. There was more juice or hot drinks at the end of the day. One student was quoted as saying: With all the eating and sleeping, “I don’t think I learned an awful lot”.

At Christmas the Shriners put up a tree and gave a party with fruit and candy, magicians and clowns. For impoverished students it was probably the only Christmas they had.

One alumna realized as she grew older that attending Trudeau carried a stigma. Some outsiders called it the “skinny school”. “Kids in the neighborhood asking why we’re going to this school. I’ve heard people say if you went there, there was something wrong with you. I never felt the stigma. Everybody was poor then.” The Trudeau program was phased out in 1938.

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