



Balboa/South Indian Trail



Balboa/South Indian Trail - Days of Yore

A well-worn path crossed the Balboa/South Indian Trail neighborhood, used for Native Americans traveling from the southwest to Mt. Spokane, and later by settlers traveling from Spokane Falls to the pioneer Colville road and toward the Columbia River. A Scotch-Irishman named Robert McKinley, who was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland and grew up in Philadelphia, acquired 640 acres of land in 1883, at a spot along the road where travelers would stop because of a spring offering the only drinking water between the Little Spokane and the big river. McKinley referred to this as the Indian Springs camp. The natives named him E-lo-uke, or “man with big tree house,” for the log house he built below the spring and in which he and his wife, Helen lived. The McKinleys later lived to the west, near the river, and eventually moved to a home in the city. The 1940 Census indicates Robert became a traveling wholesale drug salesman.



In 1926, Olaf Upsjon interpreted markings on a rock near the Indian springs “as bearing the record ... of the hardy Norske being here in the year 1010.” This record was later described as an account of a battle between natives and a band of Norsemen visiting the spring, but controversy persisted over whether the writings were Native American or Old Norse. The City of Spokane acquired the remaining 225 acres of the old McKinley homestead in 1948 for a rock crushing site, shortly before Helen McKinley died. As terms of the transfer, she stipulated that the “Runic” rock be preserved.



Most of the neighborhood is built on the original McKinley homestead, including both of its elementary schools. In 1931, a landfill was opened on the west side of Indian Trail Road and stopped receiving refuse in 1991. The neighborhood was annexed between 1956 and 1966.



Balboa Elementary School opened in 1960 in Spokane's Pacific Heights Addition on the site of a former chicken ranch. The name honors the Spanish explorer who was the first European to see the Pacific Ocean. Salk Junior High School (now Salk Middle School) opened its doors in 1961. The schools both experienced years of overcrowding as the Pacific Heights development brought families into the area, before other schools were built to help absorb the population. Indian Trail Elementary opened in 1964, adjacent to a new city park with the same name.



The Balboa/South Indian Trail Neighborhood Council meets the 1st Wednesday of the month at Salk Middle School Cafeteria. No July, August, or December meetings.

balboasouthindiantrail.spokaneneighborhoods.org



Life in Balboa/South Indian Trail – Today

The Balboa/South Indian Trail neighborhood is well established and provides for a safe and clean community. Residents enjoy the low cost of living and proximity to neighborhood serving retail including a locally owned grocery store on Francis Avenue. This is a family oriented neighborhood where many residents enjoy outdoor activities like walking, biking, and running. Neighbors are proud to call Balboa/South Indian Trail home, as evidenced by the well maintained houses and yards.

