



# Emerson-Garfield



## Emerson-Garfield - Days of Yore

Built mostly in the early 20th century, Emerson-Garfield is one of Spokane's original neighborhoods. On its north side, the area that is now Corbin Park was once a 40-acre oval race track owned by the Washington Idaho and Fair Association. Horses, bicycles and people raced around the track while spectators cooled themselves with lemonade. The fair and races lasted from 1887 to 1890, and the races continued independently until 1899 when D.C. Corbin, a wealthy mining and railroad mogul, purchased the property. Corbin presented the City with a plan to plat a residential area surrounding the racetrack oval. The resulting park helped enhance the surrounding lots and resulted in a concentration of distinguished homes in the Queen Anne, Bungalow and Classic Box architectural styles. In 1913, a master plan for the park was developed by the Olmsted Brothers, landscape architects of national renown.

Trolleys had an important influence on wider neighborhood development. Spokane's streetcar era lasted from 1888 to 1936; during this period Emerson-Garfield was connected to downtown Spokane and points beyond with multiple trolley lines along neighborhood streets. By the first quarter of the 20th century, the neighborhood was well established along these fixed public transportation routes. Along North Monroe Street, the neighborhood's central retail corridor, were several bakeries, apartments, a church, an undertaker, a fire station and the Palladian-style Carnegie Library. A boat shop, auto repair and a dress factory were among the businesses that lined North Division Street at the eastern edge of the neighborhood.

Starting with Emerson Elementary in 1893, schools were built to serve the neighborhood. The school was a brick building that consisted of six rooms. Just five years after construction, Emerson added 12 more rooms, and then peaked with enrollment in 1909 with 709 students. Garfield Elementary was built not long after Emerson, opening in 1899. Garfield was originally housed in a new brick building composed of two stories and ten rooms. North Central High School—so named to distinguish it from South Central (now Lewis and Clark High School)—opened in 1908 while still under construction. By 1909, it was expected to be the largest and best equipped high school in the Northwest. Also in 1909, Audubon Elementary opened in a four-room brick school. Havermale Junior High School opened later in 1928. Churches such as Knox Presbyterian (b. 1917) and the Mission-inspired St. Anthony (b. 1909) likewise emerged to fill the community's spiritual and social needs.



The Emerson-Garfield Neighborhood Council meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month - 6:00pm, Corbin Senior Center, 827 W. Cleveland Ave.

[emersongarfield.spokaneneighborhoods.org](http://emersongarfield.spokaneneighborhoods.org)



Taking its name from its two historic elementary schools, Emerson-Garfield was officially established as a neighborhood in 1976. By this time, the original neighborhood streets had been widened to carry additional vehicle traffic as the suburbs expanded north, segmenting some of the neighborhood's previous cohesion. The neighborhood saw other changes—some large, some small—in the period that followed. In 1979, Spokane Public Radio moved its facilities into the red-brick Hoban Building along North Monroe, beginning a 37-year tenure there .

During the 1980s, the stately buildings that housed Emerson, Garfield and Audubon Elementary as well as North Central High School were all demolished as part of a massive citywide reconstruction project. Each of the schools was rebuilt on or close to the former sites, with the exception of Emerson Elementary, which became a park. Havermale Junior High School was given a new use as the Community School/ Joseph Jantsch High School.

But a need for preservation was also recognized. The former ice cream factory at Shannon and Wall (b. 1914) was given new life as C.O.P.S. North Central. During the 1990s, Corbin Park Historic District was listed on the Spokane and the National Historic Registers, becoming Spokane's first local residential historic district. This coincided with an increasing desire for neighborhood advocacy. In 1986, civic-minded residents drafted the neighborhood's first design plan to address issues such as land use and community resources. Emerson-Garfield residents were the first to apply for formal recognition as a neighborhood through the City's newly established Office of Neighborhood Services in 1995.

### Life in Emerson-Garfield - Today

Emerson-Garfield has a strong mix of residential and commercial land uses. With such diversity it's impossible to characterize the community according to one predominant theme. More than 9,000 people live in this historic but evolving neighborhood: longtime residents, young professionals, students, growing families and local business owners. Private companies, independent retailers, service businesses, seasonal markets, restaurants and almost every type of basic consumer need are met along the busy arterial streets of Monroe, Northwest Boulevard, Indiana and Division. Now unified in the former Havermale/Community School building, Spokane Public Montessori rounds out the strong presence of public schools and the private Trinity Catholic School. Emerson and Corbin Parks remain popular outdoor attractions for all ages. Residents appreciate their down-to-earth neighbors, tree-lined local streets, easy access to nearby amenities and downtown Spokane, and the historical character of the many older homes and commercial buildings.

### Emerson-Garfield - Treasures

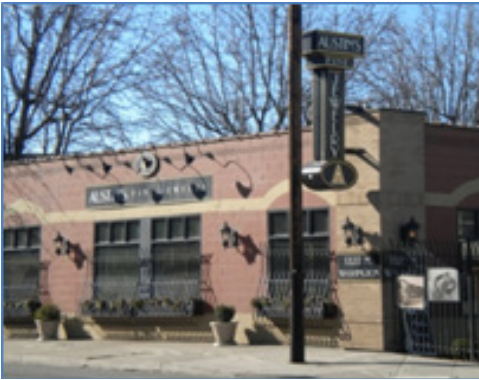
- Corbin and Emerson Parks



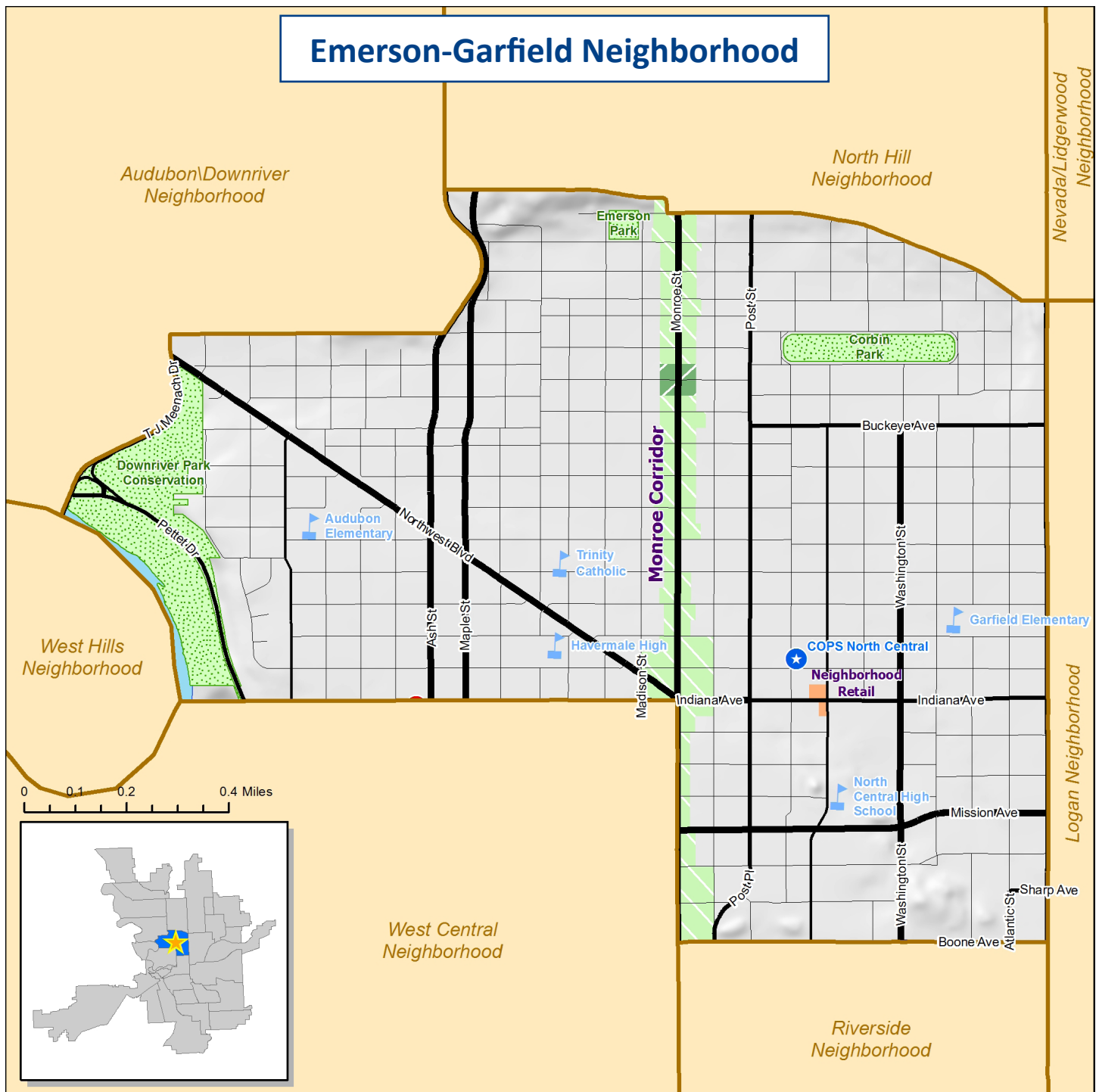


- Drumheller Springs Historic District
- Carnegie Library (b. 1914)
- John A. Currie House (b. 1889)
- Inland Casket Company Building (b. 1913, 1927)

## Emerson-Garfield - Natural & Built Identity



The neighborhood has only modest elevation changes and few natural rock outcroppings, conditions that made it suitable for the rapid development of Spokane in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Its community quickly emerged during this prosperous period of Spokane. Schools in particular played a significant role in Emerson-Garfield, meeting increasing educational needs with new facilities over the years. North Monroe Street, a central north-south thoroughfare, has been a major transportation and business corridor since the beginning; it will be revitalized and beautified through a 2018 infrastructure project. A number of extant historic commercial buildings and homes give Emerson-Garfield a strong connection to its past. Some have been carefully restored and maintained, while others have yet to be returned to their original beauty. Emerson-Garfield as a whole is in a period of transition, reemerging as a neighborhood that seamlessly combines the charm of its still-visible yesterdays with the forward-thinking promise of its tomorrows.



#### SOURCES

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 Flat wheels & five cent fares: the story of Spokane's street car era, by Randall A. Johnson, 1968.  
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