



University Place Neighborhood History



named for a man named Jacob Haish, who pledged one-half the gross sales of his barbed wire in Nebraska for one year to help fund the new building. The Haish Building, which cost \$50,000 to build and \$10,000 to furnish, was to be a manual training school. In 1891, it was the most up-to-date school of its kind in the U.S. **(6)**

Like Havelock or Bethany, University Place was once a separate village, with its own police force, high school and village council. Never a large community, University Place was, even in 1922, a town of only 2000 people. **(1)** In comparison, Lincoln in 1922 held over 50,000 inhabitants. **(2)** University Place was incorporated into Lincoln in 1926. **(3)** Much of the history of the University Place neighborhood is tied into the history of Nebraska Wesleyan University.

Sadly, only three years later, on January 29, 1894, an arsonist burned the building to the ground. Little could be done to stop the fire, as there was no water main anywhere near the building, and University Place had only a very small volunteer fire department. Volunteers from nearby Bethany were called over to help, but by the time they arrived, it was too late. Adding to Wesleyan's misery, the building did not have fire insurance. **(7)**

In 1886, there were Methodist schools at York and Central City. Both were in dire financial straits, so the bishop at the time decided that all of the educational work of the church should be consolidated into one institution. A site three miles to the northeast of Lincoln was chosen, and a town began to form around the University's first building, which was called Old Main. **(4)**



Even more surprising is the fact that the chancellor was quite sure he knew who the culprit was, but nothing was ever done. The young man responsible has never been identified, but it has been surmised that the culprit must have been the son of a very prominent local citizen, since no charges were ever pressed. **(8)**

The first town charter for University Place was signed on January 5, 1889 by Wesleyan's first Chancellor, Charles F. Creighton and forty other members of the community. The original charter forbade saloons and pool halls within the city limits. It also forbade movies, unless they were shown outside, and no horseshoes were to be played on Sunday. This strict charter earned University Place its nickname: the Holy City Nigh Unto Bethany. **(5)** Even today there are no pubs within the boundaries of the neighborhood.



The town of University Place continued to be closely connected with Wesleyan University. The Van Fleet Teachers College on campus, built in 1891, also served as the High School for University Place from 1917 to 1931. Its function as a high school did not end until 1977 (McKee speech). **(9)**

Wesleyan University did have its share of difficulties during its first years. The first building after Old Main to be erected was the Haish Building. The building was

The University Place neighborhood today is a large and diverse area. Along 48th Street, which was once Warren Avenue when the area was still a separate village, one can see remnants of the village character, with many small shops lining the street. Many of the homes immediately surrounding Wesleyan University are now student housing. **(10)**

Sources

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3. Historic and Architectural Site Survey of Malone, Near South and South Salt Creek Neighborhoods, Lincoln Nebraska. (Lincoln: College of Architecture, 1974), 13.
4. Sawyer, A.J. ed. Lincoln the Capital City and Lancaster County Nebraska. Vol 1. (Chicago: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1916), 226.
5. McKee, Jim. "The Holy City..."
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10.
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