FOUNDING OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PUGET SOUND

SITE

John Wesley, the earthly father of the Methodist Church, was a very distinguished educator. He was taught by his father who was a rector of the Episcopal Church in Epworth, England. He went on a scholarship to Oxford and was a student at Christ Church. He was an outstanding student and he was made a teacher at Lincoln College, Oxford. He felt very keenly that there should be a combination of "piety and wisdom." This has been the charter for the educational program of the Methodist Church.

From Bristol, which is one of the Methodist historical areas, he sent Mr. Asbury and Mr. Coke as missionaries to America. As he walked up the gang plank he said, "Start schools and colleges. Our people must be some of the best educated in every community."

This was really the charter for the founding of over one thousand academies in the growth of America. Over one thousand schools, colleges, and academies were started, of which about one hundred and ten still exist, counting the mission schools in Appalachia, the Indian areas, and other minorities. In that list, all the Wesleyan Universities are Methodist founded. Many other schools like Duke, Syracuse, The University of Southern California, and Southern Methodist University are in the Methodist tradition. On the west coast, Alaska Methodist University, The University of Puget Sound,
Willamette University, and the University of the Pacific and International University in California were started by Methodist pioneers.

Before the American scene had free high schools, most of the people were educated in academies and most of these academies were started by the Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Congregational Church and the Catholic Church. In the period from 1850 to 1900, there were approximately five hundred universities and colleges founded in the United States. Many of these ceased to exist or were merged and became State Universities. The closest one to the University of Puget Sound is Oregon State University which was founded by the Southern Methodist Church as Philomoth. Willamette University was one of the earliest universities on the west coast. It was founded by Jason Lee, a Methodist missionary who was an outstanding educator very much interested in the education of the Indians. He lead the movement to secure the Oregon-Washington territory as a part of the United States.

The same year that Stanford University was founded - 1884 - twenty-nine Methodist leaders met in Seattle to discuss the possibility of the founding of a school in this area. There was a very lively discussion of the fact that there should be a school founded in the Puget Sound area because of the outstanding success of Willamette University and also the Olympia Collegiate Institute which was located in Olympia.
The following year Bishop John M. Walden held a conference August 13th-17th, 1885. At that time there was promised to the committee interested in founding a university, $40,000 in land and $10,000 in money if it would locate in Port Townsend. The conference met the following year in Port Townsend. The members visited the site and the Chamber of Commerce of Port Townsend promised again that they would have $40,000 in land and $10,000 in money. Most of the value in those days was in land and it was considered a very valid promise. However, the committee, after securing the vote of the conference to locate in Port Townsend, did nothing to make the promises valid. There followed considerable discussion that the conference should reconsider its action, which it did.

In 1888, the charter for the University of Puget Sound was secured. It was decided that the university should be located in Tacoma. Option was taken on a considerable amount of land - probably over 600 acres - in what is now called University Place. The ministers asked for donations of land and money. The Bishop, who was a native of Ohio, traveled through Ohio selling lots in University Place with the idea that people could come and be a part of the university community where they could see the beauty of the Olympics and the grand view of Commencement Bay which is now called the Narrows. He was very successful in selling the lots and a brochure was published extolling the virtues of the University of Puget Sound. There was a picture of "Old Main" as it was called.
which was typical of the architecture of schools at that time. The building was about four or five stories high, had rounded turrets on each corner and a tower which looked toward the west. The building was never built because the money was not raised before the panic of 1893 which deflated the land values. It is interesting that the brochure says, "Send your daughters to the University of Puget Sound because there is no malaria here."

In the present city of Steilacoom there is a monument to the fact that the First Methodist Church was located there and the first Protestant church of this area. One of the first men assigned to the Methodist Church of this area was the Reverand Mr. Blaine and his son Mr. E. L. Blaine was the first white boy born in the Seattle area. Mr. E. L. Blaine was the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the University of Puget Sound for nearly three decades.

It is reputed that when Chief Seattle led his warriors against the white population in Seattle, Mrs. Blaine, the wife of the minister took her child and boarded one of the boats in the bay in order to be secure. On many occasions I walked with Mr. Blaine around the Seattle area and he would reminisce about the fact that his father was the minister for the little church that was on First Avenue and that he played in the yard where one of the largest banks in the Pacific Northwest now stands.
It is interesting to note that when the Columbia River conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church voted to start a college it said, "It would be a praise throughout the land." It is also interesting to note that the charter reads that no one shall be denied admission because of race, color, or creed. It is also interesting to note that the first graduating class had almost fifty per cent women. The coming of the panic of 1893 caused many of the thousand academies to close and many of the colleges, likewise closed. However, the University of Puget Sound had created a University Land Company to secure whatever assets could be salvaged out of the land on which they had an interest and which is today University Place. With this Land Company, it was able to maintain a type of University with a very limited curriculum and keep the institution going.

The first campus was located on South 23rd and I and J Streets. It had a very excellent view of Mount Rainier, of the bay, and was considered to be an ideal location. However, the university did not have the $4,000 to pay the owner but borrowed it at eight percent interest. Finally, because of difficulties and also because of possibility of clouded title, it sold the building to the Tacoma School Board in 1889. The McCarver School is now on that site.

The Trustees of the University sold various amounts of the land which was donated to the University in order to pay for
its existence. On the eighth of August 1890, they elected President Charington as the first president. Some of the records say that the situation which faced President Charington was far from good. He had the problem of trying to maintain a meaningful curriculum and at the same time, balance the budget. The first curriculum dealt with the academic department - which was really an academy, the college department which was for those who had graduated from the academy, a music department which was rather elementary, and the commercial department, which emphasized penmanship, typing, and other commercial subjects.

Because of the sale of the site, the second campus was in the area of the County-City Building. It was in a rented area and, again, was maintained by the sale of land and securing of gifts through the Methodist conference. This created considerable problems because there was no room to grown and it was a highly temporary situation. The third site was at the junction of 6th Avenue and Division Avenue where the Jason Lee School is now located. The site was not very large and it was ultimately to be cutup by major arterials by the City. The Trustees could see that this was going to be a very difficult situation and on August 26, 1919, a committee was created to discuss the possibility of a new site. There were many, many meetings of the committee for the records show that they met on the twenty-sixth of August, the tenth of September and then on
the fifteenth of September, 1919 at the Methodist conference which met in Seattle, with Bishop Matthew S. Hughes in the Chair. The major item on the agenda was the location of a Methodist Institution and its creation for the State of Washington. At this meeting, Dr. Todd proposed that there be a law passed by the State legislature that each denomination be allowed a campus of forty acres tax free. This was one of the outstanding contributions which he made and later we were able to get it at one hundred acres for each denomination tax free.

The special committee to consider the larger campus had reviewed the Port Townsend situation. Mr. J. H. Vogel presided and showed drawings of the various possibilities for locations of the campus. There had been a number of sites considered. There was a very attractive site by South Tacoma which was offered free by Mr. N. Gregory, a real estate man, who, as far as I can determine was a member of the Gregory Family which ultimately were leaders in the Mason Methodist Church. Another site which the committee considered was on the shore of Lake Wapato, which was a very pleasing site but not considered large enough by the committee. Still another site was thirty acres just north of Lincoln High School. These three and the one occupied by the University at North 15th and Warner were the sites that received serious consideration.

Mr. Vogel of Seattle made the presentation and it was to a very excellent committee. Dr. Mechlinberg of Montana was
one of the members of the committee. Mr. R. H. Hughes, editor of the Pacific Christian Advocate was another member as was Dr. A. L. Howard, who represented the General Conference Board of Education of the Methodist Church. They were present to give counsel and also to discuss strategy for a financial campaign. In the meeting to select the site was President Suzzalo, who was president of the University of Washington, President Holland, who was President of Washington State University, as well as representatives of the Board of the Board of the Methodist Church who discussed the strategy of the location and the various sites.

Momentarily the situation was complicated by the fact that Mr. Gambill, who was a farmer living near Kent, made an application for an annuity offering to give some 40 acres of his farm in return for an annuity of $750 for himself and his wife. This was discussed slightly, but not seriously as a possible site because the committee had made up its mind that the college was to be located in Tacoma. However, the Kent farm was sold and the proceeds used to buy a part of the new location. When the discussion was finished, Dr. Crothers, the minister of the First Methodist Church in Seattle, made the motion that the site be located at 15th & Lawrence. Raymond Cook, who was alumnus of the class of 1906, seconded the motion and it was carried that the site be 15th & Lawrence. By this time in the history of the college, Dr. Todd was president, Mr. Dix H. Rowland was secretary of the Board of Trustees, Mr. Everill Collins was on the Board of Trustees, together with Mr. Lister and several others. It is
amazing to see how the major decisions were made by so few men. By action of the Board of Trustees on the twenty-sixth of December, 1919, Dr. Todd was authorized to get option on the site. The area was owned by several families. It was a five-year program to secure the options on the site which is now at 15th and Lawrence. At Sixth and Sprague they built the building for the classroom which was a wooden frame building with pillars in the front. They were to build a dormitory which has been remodeled and is still in the form of an apartment house on the north side. Professor Bertram McProud, who was a professor of education, once told me (he was one of my major professors at Nebraska Wesleyan in my college days) that he was very much concerned when he joined the faculty because there was no gymnasium. He, together with a group of students, went out and asked people for the lumber and they constructed the first gymnasium which the college had. In conjunction with one of the dormitories, there was a Home Economics Department in which young women were taught the art of cooking and sewing. The Women's University League, which is still very strong in the history of the University of Puget Sound, undertook as a project to equip the Home Economics Department. Later, there was a fire in the Home Economics Department and much of the equipment was burned. The League replaced the necessary equipment.

Dr. Todd was very aggressive in securing the options on the site and on the twentieth of March, 1920, he publically announced
the location of the new site for the college which was to be at 15th and Lawrence. This area was owned by many people but the major portion of it was owned by the Acme Investment Company. It was comprised of a large area that was also known as the YMCA track. While securing the options on the various pieces of property that comprise the present campus, Dr. Todd was also very eager to sell the other campus for as much money as possible. On the second of June, 1919 he leased one section, which is the intersection of Division and Sixth Avenue to the Standard Oil Company of California and that lease is still active after 60 years. Also Dr. Todd sold, on the fifteenth of February, 1921, a section where the Presbyterian Church now stands. This also comprised the section which had the music building - a small square wooden building which stood to the left of the church for many years. When they moved to the new campus, this became the residence of Dr. Davis, affectionately known as Senator Davis, who was in the Senate of the State of Washington for many years. Senator Davis was an excellent history scholar, an unmarried man, and one who knew the name of every student in his class, his home town, and his parents. It is reputed that on many occasions, Senator Davis saw to it that a hungry boy or hungry girl had adequate food and their way was paid through the University although he was on a very meager salary. I visited the Senator on a good many occasions. It was very difficult to get in his house because the books were piled everywhere. He knew where every book was and he also knew what was in every book; but he was not known as an excellent housekeeper. Dr. Frank Williston
who taught for us for many years, was an outstanding authority on Far East history, and he told me that on many occasions he remembered when the Senator came with his coat buttoned rather tightly because he had not changed out of his pajamas before coming to class.

It is interesting to note that the land was acquired from many sources including the Acme Investment Company. Frank M. McCandless was president and Mr. J. H. March was secretary. They sold the College of Puget Sound an acreage for $10,800 on March 20, 1920. The college also bought more acreage from Mr. J. H. March on March 20, 1920 for $18,500. Some of the people from whom the school purchased property were Mr. and Mrs. W. VanVechten, Mr. William Leybold, Mr. Samuel Scott, Mr. James McMullan. During this time, Dr. Todd brought suit to quiet the various titles so that all the titles would be secured because of the fact that they had difficulty with the title in one of the former sites. When I came as president, I also made an examination and found that there were certain metes and bounds which had not been stated legally. We had court action to quiet all the titles and make the metes and bounds complete. There were several places where eight to ten feet had not been legally structured.

The major portion of the area was called the YMCA track. Many people have told me they played football or baseball, rode their bicycles and ran on the YMCA track. In preliminary research, I have not been able to find that the YMCA actually owned this area but I think it was owned by the Acme Investment Company and leased to the YMCA. There is one reference in the YMCA minutes that
they could not pay the $100 rent and their lease was cancelled. It was known as the YMCA track. Central High School which is now Stadium High School had its football team practice there. Many men living today have told me they had played and exercised there. Mr. Floyd Murphy, father of an alumnus, and Mr. George Long, Jr., a friend of the University, were among those from whom I secured information. The closest street car was at Twenty-sixth and Alder. It cost a nickel to ride the street car but most of the boys walked from Central High School. It was evidently a very popular place in the City for exercise, for bicycle riding, for picnics, and for Sunday outings. The YMCA track went very close to the present Alder Street encompassing what is presently Lawrence Street. To the right of the track was a hill which was called Huckleberry Hill. When we went to work out the landscaping of the campus, it was found that we had an eighty-six foot differential between the top of Huckleberry Hill and the low spot which is in front of Anderson Hall. At one time Dr. Todd contemplated that the low area could be a lake to add to the variety of the landscaping.

It is interesting to note, also, that there was a farmstead back of the YMCA track and an orchard. There is a very straggly old apple tree between Jones Hall and Collins Library which is the last tree of the farm orchard. Where the music building is now located was the farm house. When the article came out in the paper that the farm house was to be torn down to make room for a music building, I received a call from
a woman on Fox Island who said she was so very sorry to see the house come down because her father had owned it, she had lived there as a girl, and her two sons were born in that farm house. However, it was completely obsolete. It had been used as a dormitory, it had been used as an area in which to teach art, and it was also used for the music department. I remember going over one day to see one of the music professors and inadvertently touching against the fireplace and the whole mantel fell down on the floor sending up a great cloud of soot, dust, and dirt. It was necessary that the old farm house come down and make way for the music building.

The site was filled with vales, valleys, and hills. Huckleberry Hill was approximately fifty feet high and was two blocks long. There had been various other houses on this site and for a long time there was a hole which had been used by the neighbors as a place to dispose of their tin cans and other debris. This was at the end of Puget Sound and about two hundred feet into the trees. This was the one that Dr. Todd mentioned many time because he was unhappy with the neighbors using it as a disposal area. I recall that it took over two hundred loads of earth from Huckleberry Hill to fill the ravine between the Music Building, Jones Hall, and in front of the Collins Library. I hope it will never be necessary to replace the sewer because it is twenty to twenty-five feet below the surface of the fill that was made when the Campus Green was finalized.

In securing financing for the purchase of the site, there was the proposition of selling the old site. Part of it had been
sold to the Presbyterian Church, part of it had been leased to the Standard Oil Company of California and the remaining amount was to be sold. The Tacoma School Board had shown an interest in it for the possible location of a junior high school. Dr. Todd had made a preliminary offer to the School Board asking for $90,000. He told me in conversation concerning it, he had asked for $90,000 and hoped for $75,000. As was customary, he went every year for a month or six weeks by train to New York and to the various other areas seeking financial aid from the foundations. It was on one of these trips that he was able to get James Hill to make the challenge for the first major contribution toward the endowment fund.

While on one of these trips, the secretary of the Board of Trustees, who was also the secretary of the Tacoma School Board, decided it was time to sell the campus. As representing the School Board, he made an offer to the Trustees of the College. He made an appraisal of the value lot by lot and came up with the amount of $49,000. In his conversation with me, Dr. Todd said he knew he would never get $90,000 but he had hoped for $75,000. He was very disappointed when he returned and learned that the Board had taken Mr. Alfred Lister's offer of $49,000 for what Dr. Todd thought should be $75,000. In those days there was no "conflict of interest" emphasis and Mr. Lister thought he had made a very outstanding business proposition both for the College and also for the School Board. Dr. Todd did not reveal his disappointment. He mentioned it to me rarely and said that Mr. Lister had been very outstanding in his dedication to
the University and had worked diligently for its growth. For that reason he never said anything about it although he always remembered it. He felt the University had actually been denied $26,000 in a time when it needed it very much.

It is interesting how sometimes these things work out. Mr. Alfred Lister who was certainly a very strong Methodist and a very dedicated man as far as the City was concerned and as far as the College of Puget Sound was concerned, had a son by the name of Kingston Lister, who was a leader in the savings and loan industry. He was a representative for the state as the executive secretary for the State Savings and Loan Association. Mr. Kingston Lister had a very beautiful daughter who graduated from the University of Puget Sound and majored in art but unfortunately came to a very tragic death early in her life.

One day Kingston Lister called me and said he would like to come and see me. He came to my office and stated the fact that his father had been very much interested in the College of Puget Sound and had served on its Board faithfully and well. In a rather unusual way, he implied there was something in the history of the College of Puget Sound that he would like to rectify. I did not know what it was and it was not until after his interview with me that I quizzed Dr. Todd at some great length about what it might be. He then told me the story and said it should never really be discussed as long
Kingston Lister said a very unusual thing had happened. He had been very much interested in transients that came to and from the City of Tacoma and there was one transient that he found living on the tide flats (evidently in a box car or in some unusual situation) and he had befriended the man and had seen that he had proper care and a proper place to live. In the process, the transient told him that he had certain assets that he wanted Mr. Lister to distribute according to his best judgement. The man died and Mr. Lister had at his disposal $36,000 and he said he wanted to give it to the College of Puget Sound because he felt that it would be the kind of thing that his father would like to have done and it was his first choice that the College of Puget Sound benefit by it. So in many ways, the money which Dr. Todd felt so keenly should have come, finally came in a very unusual way. This became part of the permanent endowment fund of the University because in my administration we had a formula whereby the money that came by bequest went into the endowment fund. The money which we needed for buildings came out of the current tax dollar giving.

Another very interesting situation which developed concerning the site was the fact that after World War II when we knew there was a great pressure for us to build dormitories, classroom buildings and other facilities as well as to revise our curriculum in a very adventuresome way, Mr.
Norton Clapp, who was then chairman of Weyerhaueser Company, called me and asked me to come down to his office. I went down and we talked about the College of Puget Sound, its needs and in the next step of development both from the standpoint of curriculum as well as the facilities. Mr. clapp quizzed me as to the number of acres we had on the campus, the developmental situation and what long-range plans were envisioned. He then rather interestingly said, "You should sell the whole thing to the City of Tacoma for a city college or a community college and go out and start new between here and Federal Way."

He said there was a very beautiful area out there which was undeveloped and would make an ideal campus for the College of Puget Sound. It was a very interesting suggestion and one which I took seriously and took to the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees. We discussed it at some length and the fact that we had over fifty acres here, we had four buildings, the City was used to it, the constituents were used to our location, and to start new again would seem to appear that the college was not in good academic or financial condition. Informally, the men told me they thought we ought not to do it. Particularly this was true of Mr. Kilworth who was Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Mr. Roe Shaub, who was head of the Finance Committee, and Mr. Fred Karlen. Several other Trustees thought we ought to remain where we are. It was very interesting that many years later, Weyerhaueser Company would go out and locate their head-
quarters in exactly the area that Mr. Clapp had suggested many years before.

To the original site was added eleven acres which we purchased from Mr. John S. Baker and which story is in other areas of this historical resource manuscript. Then too, we felt that the campus metes and bounds should be established and the long range planning committee decided in about 1970 that the metes and bounds should be Washington Street on the west, 18th Street on the north, Alder Street on the east and 9th Street on the south. Then we decided that when houses in that area came on the market, we would purchase them and amortize them over 40 years and allow the rent from students and faculty to pay for the area which was what we really desired. We found that after the first two or three years, the faculty decided they were not particularly interested in renting from the University although the students have chosen this housing because it has many of the amenities of home while they are attending the University.

We worked for several years to get all the areas where the fraternity houses are now built. There was one Scandinavian with whom I conferred for three years before we finally got his house so that we could complete the University of Puget Sound fraternity system. He was very adament that he did not want the fraternities to have access to his area but finally after he became somewhat incapacitated, he sold the lots and house to us. This was at the north end on the Washington
Street side. On the south side of the fraternity complex on the Washington Street side, there was a little couple who built there as a bride and groom. For fifty years he worked for the News Tribune. I asked him if they would give us an option on purchasing the area on which this tiny house was located. He said he would like to if his daughter would agree to it. His daughter was not amenable to it although when the tunnels were built for the fraternity house complex, we put a temporary concrete door in the tunnel which leads out to the area where his house was. I saw him every year for many years until finally he and his wife died. We approached the daughter but she did not have any interest in selling the lot and at the moment there is no suggestion that another fraternity house be built to be added to the fraternity house system of feeding.

The campus site was purchased and developed through much hard work and sacrifice. Dr. Todd often told me how proud he was to see it blossom and become more beautiful each year. He often commented on the fact that I kept the splendid Tudor architecture, that we kept every tree possible and planted dozens of new ones. The dreams of the founders and the pioneers are realized more each year for the campus has become one of the most beautiful on the west coast.

My heart was warmed when following a couple into Jones Hall; the father of a young freshman stopped and said to the mother and son, "This is one of the most beautiful
campuses I have ever seen. This is how a University should look."