

**Reprinted From**  
**WESTMAR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS ASSOCIATION**  
**Volume 15, Issue 1, Page 2 – February 2013-02-28**

**Bricks and Mortar and More –**  
**113 Years of Westmar Buildings – A Summary**  
**by Wayne G. Marty**



The Western Union (Westmar) College campus had **no buildings** when it opened as a new college of the United Evangelical Church in the fall of 1900, because the only building present, when the campus was purchased by the church from the Le Mars Normal School Association was struck by lightning and burned to the ground on August 24, 1900. Therefore the first classes were held in downtown Le Mars buildings until the new Thoren Hall was completed for the opening of the 2<sup>nd</sup> school year in the fall of 1901. The following is a summary of the Westmar buildings since 1901 with changes coming rapidly after the City of Le Mars became the property owners of the campus when the college closed in November 1997.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Building</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
1901	Thoren Hall	— Demolished November 11, 1990
1904	Union Hall Dorm	—Demolished 1964
1908	First Gymnasium	—Privately owned Day Care and Small Wonders Pre School
1916	First President's Home	— Privately owned after being moved for campus expansion
1920	Dubs Memorial	— Demolished March 29, 2002
1921	Heating Plant	—Demolished June 2010
1922	Wernli Hall	— Demolished March 12, 2002
1940	Second President's Home	—Privately owned
1941	Second Gymnasium	— Le Mars city owned Aquatic Center
1941	Airport	— Sold to the City of Le Mars in 1964
1947	First Kime Science Hall	— Demolished February 2002
1947	Industrial Arts Building	—A portion still used by Le Mars YMCA
	Married Student Housing	— Privately owned apartments
1947	Memorial/Koehler Hall	— Privately owned apartments

- 1950 Library — Privately owned with a goal to become a Restaurant
- ??- Misc. near-campus homes — All privately owned
- 1958 Weidler Hall — Le Mars city owned for various social services offices
- 1959 Athletic Stadium — Sold to Le Mars Community School in 1983
- 1964 Bonebrake Hall — Privately owned apartments
- 1967 Second Kime Science Hall — Demolition in progress (2013)
- 1969 The Commons — Le Mars city owned Convention Center
- 1969 Centennial Hall — Privately owned for multi-business use
- 1990 Life Sports Center — Le Mars city owned Wellness Center
- 1990 South Academic Center — Owned by Rejoice Community church

Major building “booms” occurred in the 1920’s the post WWII 1940’s and during the rapid enrollment expansion of the 1960’s. These 25 “Bricks and Mortar” structures served the college usefully for various periods of time. The Stadium and Airport were sold in the 60’s when expansion capital was needed and it was difficult for the college to provide necessary funds for desirable upgrades and maintenance. Union Hall and Thoren were demolished while the college was still in operation. Demolition has been directed for five additional buildings since the college closed in 1997. Eight buildings, at least five campus adjacent houses, and many acres of campus space have been sold to private owners and have become tax producing property for the City of Le Mars. Six buildings have been retained by the City of Le Mars to provide beneficial service for Le Mars residents.

Houses and Condos have been built on much of the former athletic space south of the campus. A Funeral Home stands on the former recreation space south of Bonebrake. A new Le Mars Fire Station was constructed on former Westmar Property south of the newer Westmar tennis courts. Tennis courts that filled the space between the Library and Memorial/Koehler Hall will be remembered by older alumni. This was actually multipurpose space with an ice skating rink during some winters and a nice clean car repair space for the mechanic wannabes to use during lovely spring days of old when cars could still be repaired and adjusted with minimal tools. Now the space has found a new purpose as the location for the new Le Mars water tower that boldly proclaims

**LeMars—Ice Cream Capital of the World.**

The Westmar physical structures can live in our memory whether they have been demolished or continue to be used and beside those memories are the persistent memories of people, creative thought, loves, philosophical tensions, and problem solving challenges. Memory is a precious gift, is still poorly understood and remains as one of the great frontiers for study today. In memory form the Westmar Buildings and the faculty and student interactions that occurred within the buildings will live on for many more years. The buildings have left their legacy.

By Wayne Marty



Isn't this fun?



Here's one of those "ole" get togethers.

After dinner harmony





Jolane Bakley and Dick Mills "charm" prospective students while discussing their future plans.



Must have been a good one!