

FORTY YEARS OF GOD'S GUIDANCE:  
A SYNOPTIC HISTORY FROM 1945  
TO 1985 SHOWING THE DEVELOPMENT  
AND ESTABLISHMENT OF NEBRASKA EVANGELICAL  
LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL, WACO, NEBRASKA

WLS Church History  
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"Man proposes but God disposes." So it has been said of nearly every effort that humans seek to undertake. Aspire as they might, even the most well-intentioned planners ultimately have to yield to the old qualifier, "God-willing."

This principle holds true even for Christians who seek to promote God's kingdom; they must ultimately yield to God's good will despite their own personal visions. For example, in the instance of this paper's topic, the history of N.E.L.H.S., God's guidance is obviously the dominating factor. A good many individuals poured their money, efforts, sweat, tears, prayers and hopes into particular high school plans that simply did not come to fruition. Others rallied, promoted, urged, argued, quibbled, quarreled, lost their tempers, and despaired over the issue, only to be humbled by having God's superior plans dropped into their laps.

In the end, though, God did fulfill the hopes of many by granting the Nebraska District a Lutheran High School. And that is the purpose of this paper--to show how God, despite the imperfect motives and actions of men, provided for the establishment of Nebraska Evangelical Lutheran High School, Waco, Nebraska.

N.E.L.H.S., although established fairly recently, has its roots running deep into the past four decades. It was in the mid 1940's when the notion of a Lutheran High School within the Nebraska District was seriously considered.

At first, though, a Lutheran High School in Nebraska was to fulfill only one purpose—to train young people for the preaching and teaching ministry. The proposed high school was also to be a Synodical school, not one which would be maintained on the local level.

As it turned out, however, the idea of a locally run Area Lutheran High School eventually came to the fore. And the pendulum began to swing toward the idea of establishing a high school which would offer a Christian general education, not limited to pre-ministry training.

In 1979 the long-awaited high school finally opened. Located in the small town of Waco, Nebraska, this Area Lutheran High School has a current enrollment of a little over 100 students, most of whom reside in the dormitories.

N.E.L.H.S. has been an area of interest for my family for three generations: my grandfather, John Freese, who served on various high school committees during the 1950's; my father, Richard Freese, who serves on the present Board of Control; and my sister Tresa, who graduated from N.E.L.H.S. in 1985.

The extent of this paper basically involves 40 years-- from 1945 through 1985. The reason the paper stops with 1985 is simply to cover precisely a 40-year segment of this school's history. Since 1985, the high school has remained quite stable and continues to grow.

The synoptic fashion in which this paper presents the history of N.E.L.H.S. is not merely to give the cold, bare facts of its development, but rather to reflect some of

the motives, concerns, defeats, and triumphs of those who sought (or fought) its establishment.

Of course, not all the historical details can be presented or even traced. Nor can all the individuals directly or remotely connected with the high school's establishment be mentioned. Suffice it to say that the efforts of all are appreciated.

The sources for this paper consist mainly of "odds and ends"--minutes, letters, notes, and the like. No books as such have been written on the subject. Yet, for the sake of listing the specifics, these following sources contributed to the formulating of this paper: Synod Convention proceedings; Nebraska District Convention proceedings; Conference minutes; minutes of N.E.L.H.S. Board of Control meetings; N.E.L.H.S. Student Handbooks and Catalogs; a 1957 historical sketch by Pastor D. Grummert; letters from the "Nebraska Lutheran Academy Board of Regents"; letters from the Synod Board of Trustees; and a large bundle of documents and materials collected over the years by Richard Freese, member of the N.E.L.H.S. Board of Control. It is my understanding that all these materials will soon be gathered to help form the N.E.L.H.S. archives.

Special thanks for this paper go to my father, Richard Freese. Not only has he shown me the importance of lay involvement in church projects, but also the truth of the passage, "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." (James 5:16)

It is my hope that this paper serves to promote the desire for N.E.L.H.S. and similar Area Lutheran High Schools. If at any time anyone wants to utilize this historical overview, he may do so; the format of the paper lends itself to just such a use.

1945

The first official discussion concerning the establishment of a Lutheran High School within the Nebraska District came at the Nebraska District Pastoral Conference held in June of 1945. This Conference met in Lincoln, Nebraska. The following minutes were taken from the sixth session, June 21: "The motion regarding an Academy carried that the Visitors Tessmer, Fritze, Witt and Gruendemann be a committee to consider the advisability of an Academy in our Nebraska District, and report their findings to the Pastoral Conference in 1946. The Nebraska District can memorialize the Nebraska District Convention in 1946 if it favors an Academy in Nebraska."

1946

The Nebraska Pastoral Conference met May 7-9, 1946, at Hastings, Nebraska. At the sixth session, May 9, the Academy Committee consisting of four Visitors (Tessmer, Fritze, Gruendemann, Witt) gave the following report: "We the Visitors of the Nebraska District recommend to the Nebraska District Synod Convention the adopting of a resolution to establish an Academy in our District for reasons here given:

1. In general to further Christian education.
2. In particular to aid in preparing students for the public work in the church as pastors and teachers.
3. Other institutions are too far away from our District which serves as a handicap to an

enrollment from our District.

4. To get students from our District as future workers in our District.
5. To increase institution consciousness in our District."

At the Nebraska District Convention of June 19-24, 1946, the above recommendation was adopted as a memorial to the next Synod Convention.

### 1947

The Annual Pastoral Conference of the Nebraska District met June 24-26, 1947. We read from the minutes of the third session, June 25: "Pastor Hackbarth spoke of the proposed Academy. We are expanding. There are ten more parochial schools, and more are planned. We should put an Academy near such places and strengthen the bonds. Synod always asks this question: Would this serve as a feeder to our other institutions? This is the point that should be regarded. We need to encourage more of our western men, whom we know will more likely be satisfied with the West and stay here for work after graduation. Our delegates should be prepared as to the stand that should be taken at this summer's session of Synod."

The 29th Convention of the Joint Synod met in Watertown, Wisconsin at Northwestern College on August 6-12, 1947. On page 71 of the proceedings we find the Nebraska District Academy Memorial. This memorial was put into the hands of a committee, whose decision we find

on page 78 of the above proceedings:

II. In the matter of establishment of new academies.

- A. Although we recognize that the establishment of additional academies is very desirable and should be included in the long range educational program of the Synod, we recommend that the establishment of new academies not be undertaken at the present time....
- B. We recommend that the Conference of Presidents be instructed to make a survey as to the most desirable location of future academies.

1948

On page 85 of the 1948 Nebraska District Convention proceedings we see the report of the Conference of Presidents regarding the establishment of new academies:

Academies in Arizona, Nebraska, Pacific-Northwest

1.

Desirable as these projects may be, we hold that the successful completion of the Wisconsin Synod Building Fund Collection and the erection of the contemplated building must at present engage our entire attention and energy.

2.

We recommend, however, that the Synod continue to study the relative need of the requested academies in Arizona, Nebraska, and the Pacific-Northwest.

1949

The 30th Convention of the Joint Synod was held August 3-9, 1949. On page 88 of the proceedings we find the Synod's action regarding the report of the Conference of Presidents: "After some discussion a motion prevailed to table the report. Resolved: to appoint a committee of



professors to give immediate and thorough study to the suggestion of the Presidents to make use of the various Lutheran High Schools in order to increase the number of workers for the church."

The matter of a Synodical Academy in the Nebraska District lay dormant until 1952.

### 1952

The 18th Biennial Convention of the Nebraska District was held June 17-20, 1952, at Plymouth, Nebraska. Here the report of the Survey Committee (committee of professors set up in 1949) was presented to the Nebraska District for consideration. This report recommended that Synod establish the next new Academy in Milwaukee.

In response, the Nebraska District resolved again to memorialize the Synod for an Academy in the Nebraska District. The District President was also instructed to appoint a standing committee of four, representing all conferences. They were to gather pertinent information to promote the Academy cause, and to bring their findings to the 1953 Nebraska District Pastoral Conference for approval and thereupon to the attention of the Joint Synod Convention in 1953. Thus the "Academy Committee" was inaugurated.

The Academy Committee consisted of four Pastors: Hoyer, Schulz, Molkentin and Grummert. They met for the first time on October 22, 1952, in conjunction with the Nebraska District Teachers Conference at Geneva, Nebraska.

Their work culminated in a memorial to the 1953 Synod Convention to establish a new Academy within the Nebraska District.

### 1953

The Academy Committee's memorial of 1952 was brought to the Synod Convention of 1953. It was acted upon through the Survey Committee. On page 85 of the proceedings we see the outcome:

"To point B of the Survey Committee Report we recommend: that the Synod establish an Academy in the Nebraska District as soon as the Synod declares that monies for it are available."

This resolution came about not only as a result of the District memorial, but also as a result of the Synod's Institutional Survey Committee which stated that year that the Nebraska District be granted a maximum of \$500,000 for an Academy.

### 1954

The Convention of the Nebraska District of June 15-18, 1954, met at Stanton, Nebraska. Here the Academy Committee was enlarged. On page 27 of the proceedings we read:

"For advice and consultation on major issues the following have been elected to the Academy Committee: District President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, the four Visitors, and one laymen from each conference chosen by the conference."

The next project focused on an appropriate site for the Academy. At first the property of the York College in

York, Nebraska seemed feasible. However, after thorough investigation by the Academy Committee, Synodical officials and other parties, the York property was deemed unsatisfactory. The reason was that no clear title could be obtained. Realizing that the Synod might turn down the York property, the Nebraska District had drawn up another memorial for the upcoming Synod Convention at Saginaw, Michigan. This memorial hoped to enable the Nebraska District itself to choose a suitable site for the Academy.

#### 1955

The 1954 memorial of the Nebraska District we find printed on page 73 of the proceedings of the 1955 Synod Convention, under the Survey Committee Report. Here is the result:

"Resolved, that the Nebraska District be authorized to select and/or acquire under the Board of Trustees in behalf of the Synod the definite site of the Academy; and be it further Resolved, that the Nebraska District prepare plans and specifications whenever the Board of Trustees indicates that the monies are available for such plans and specifications."

This was adopted by Synod.

On the basis of the resolutions of Synod stated above, work was begun on the survey and search for a suitable Academy site. A letter was sent to each congregation of the District, asking them to nominate cities and to give reasons for such nominations.

1956

On April 12, 1956 the enlarged Academy Committee met in Omaha. Based on nominations from the congregations of the District, a thorough study was begun by the Committee concerning the following cities: Norfolk, Lincoln, Grand Island, North Platte. In order to complete this study, a Site Committee was engaged. This Committee consisted of the original Committee plus lay representatives from each conference: Mr. W. Gutzmann, Norfolk, Central Conference; Mr. J. Freese, Plymouth, Southern Conference; Mr. Robbins, Golden Colorado, Colorado Conference; Mr. Hasche, Rosebud Conference. (K. Barry had at this time replaced H. Witt on the original Committee.)

Based on the Site Committee's research, a ballot vote was taken at the Nebraska District Convention at Hadar, Nebraska, July 19, 1956. Grand Island was chosen as the Academy site.

When this had been done, other important matters were also dispensed with in the form of a memorial to Synod. These had to do with a name for the Academy, the proposal for the "Board of Regents," a submitting of a list of candidates for the Board, and also that the Synod Constitution be amended to provide for the Academy.

The memorial was directed to the special session of Synod in Convention at Watertown, Wisconsin, in August of 1956. At this session the name "Nebraska Lutheran Academy" was adopted. The choice of Grand Island, Nebraska was also adopted. The election of the Board of

Regents was deferred to the regular session of 1957.

1957

The Synod Convention at New Ulm, Minnesota stated the following: "The Floor Committee joins the Nebraska District in the cherished hope that the Board of Trustees may find it possible to carry out the Saginaw resolution (re: Nebraska Lutheran Academy) with regard to the site and plans at the earliest possible date." The Convention also recommended the election of a Board of Regents for the Academy, and resolved, "That if the Synod authorizes a major building fund collection, the Nebraska Academy project be included."

The Site Committee then set about to determine which available tract of land in Grand Island should be chosen. They finally decided upon a 33 acre piece of property at Faidley Avenue and Howard Street.

Recalling that the Saginaw resolution of 1955 gave the Nebraska District authority "to prepare plans and specifications whenever the Board of Trustees indicates that the monies are available," the Site Committee recommended that the Helleberg firm of Kearney, Nebraska be contracted for architectural work on the site. At that time, however, the Board of Trustees had not given approval to such action.

Following the Synod recommendation of that year, the Academy Committee was replaced by the newly elected Board of Regents. Elected to this Board were: Pastors D. Grummert,

L. Gruendemann, H. Kruschel; also T. Jones, L. Koenig, M. Ingebritson, and A. Workentine.

1958

The Synod's Board of Trustees officially acquired the Grand Island property for the Academy site. The price was \$21,000. Thus Synod received title to two adjacent tracts, one from the heirs of Jesse James O'Connor and the other known as the Wache tract, together totaling 33 acres.

1959

The 1959 Synod Convention at Saginaw, Michigan rejected the Academy Board of Regents' request to authorize the construction of an Academy at the cost of \$650,000 and to call a president for this institution.

The Synod also resolved "that this entire matter of the Nebraska Lutheran Academy be placed into the long range program of the Synod for reevaluation."

This action marked a noticeable change in Synod's desire for an Academy in the Nebraska District. From here on, Synod began to lose interest in the project.

1960

In order to perpetuate the desire for their Academy, the Nebraska District Convention resolved that its congregations conduct a spring Academy Sunday and also area Reformation services. The monies collected were designated

for an Academy Fund. This arrangement continued for the next four years.

1962

In 1962, Luther Junior College of Wahoo, Nebraska (a complete and fully adequate school for 150 dormitory students) became available for the price of about \$500,000. It had been appraised at \$950,000.

The Nebraska District sent a memorial to the special Synod Convention at New Ulm, Minnesota, in November of 1962. This memorial requested that if the District could raise the purchase price, the Synod operate the school as its Academy. The memorial also stated that if the Luther College in Wahoo could be purchased, the Grand Island site be sold to supplement funds raised by the District.

This memorial was tabled until the next regular Synod Convention.

1963

In May of 1963 Pastor W.F. Wichmann, Chairman of the NLA Board of Regents, wrote the following: "It is not a high school, offering a general Christian education, which the Nebraska District desires, but an Academy preparing boys and girls for entrance at the Synod's Normal School and College in preparation for the teaching and preaching ministry. We plead with the Synod in its August Convention to grant the request of the memorial."

The memorial regarding Luther Junior College was favorably submitted by the Floor Committee to the Synod Convention held that year in Milwaukee. The delegates, however, rejected the recommendation by the close vote of 77-64.

After the Academy memorial was rejected by Synod, the NLA Board of Regents addressed the District Praesidium on August 26, 1963: "We suggest to the District Praesidium considering the feasibility of forming an association of congregations to acquire the Luther College Campus at Wahoo, Nebraska."

During the year of 1963 the city of Grand Island decided to build a road through the Academy property. 1.6 acres were purchased, leaving Synod with 31.4 acres.

The Board of Regents that year consisted of Pastors Wichmann, Gruendemann, Wietzke, Schulz and Fritze; Mr. Donald Raasch, Mr. Eldon Hirsch, Mr. Ed Raasch, and Mr. A. Workentine.

One interesting note recorded for us in the minutes of the Board of Regents meeting of 1963 reads as follows: "No harvested crop on the Academy site on Grand Island property because of hail damage."

#### 1964

The 1964 Nebraska District Convention resolved to take the two yearly Academy Sundays out of the sphere of official District action. It was now left as a local preference. It was made clear, however, that this action



was not to be considered as a lack of interest in the establishment of an Academy.

During the four years in which the Academy Sundays were observed, about \$28,000 had been collected. This amount was placed on deposit with the Treasurer of Synod to be used if and when the Academy would be established.

On March 16, 1964 the NLA Board of Regents resolved to memorialize the 1964 Nebraska District Convention to request Synod to enlarge the Synod Advisory Board of Education to include a representative from each of the Districts not having a Synodical High School. It was hoped that such an action would benefit the Nebraska Lutheran Academy cause. This plan, however, did not come to fruition.

### 1965

1965 was a year of hard feelings for those involved with the Nebraska Lutheran Academy project. Perhaps at no other time were relations between Synod and District so strained in regard to NLA.

In 1965 the Nebraska Lutheran Academy site in Grand Island was no longer tax-exempt under Nebraska statutes. Taxes on the property totaled over \$1,200 per year. During this year the Synod Board of Trustees also requested liability insurance on this property.

On January 29, 1965, Harold H. Eckert, Executive Secretary of the Synod Board of Trustees, wrote to Pastor W.F. Wichmann, Chairman of the NLA Board of Regents:

"The action of the Board of Trustees is as follows:  
the Board voted to pay the taxes (on the Grand Island  
property) from the NLA Fund, not budgetary funds."

Pastor Wichmann responded by letter, asking several  
questions of Pastor Eckert, such as, Who owns the Grand  
Island site--the Synod or the Nebraska District? Will  
the Board of Trustees pay back a reasonable rate of  
interest on the money it took from the NLA Fund to pay  
the Grand Island taxes? Is this NLA Fund being used by  
the Trustees with permission from the Nebraska District?

To those questions Pastor Eckert replied by letter  
on February 8, 1965: "The deed is in the name of the  
Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod. The Nebraska District  
could not hold title to this property since actually the  
Nebraska District is no legal entity, no legal person  
according to law. Lawfully you don't exist--terrible  
thing, isn't it, to be living and yet not existing  
according to law.... It (the NLA Fund) is a restricted  
fund--the fund as such belongs to the Wisconsin Ev.  
Lutheran Synod, unless you can produce evidence to the  
contrary.... The Board of Trustees has no intention of  
paying interest on this money which it is using to pay  
taxes.... I am awaiting the roar from the West."

To that Pastor Wichmann wrote on February 20, 1965:  
"Here is your grade based on your letter of February 8th:

Composition (spelling and sentence structure)	A
Stewardship Integrity	F"

The letter continued with similar sentiments.

Finally Pastor Eckert wrote to Pastor Wichmann March 5, 1965: "We were a few miles south of you on March 3, but they told us that for some reason or other it was so windy around Grand Island and such frigid cold weather that it wasn't advisable for us to pass through Grand Island. Actually we had planned it--we, however, never dreamed that this thing had reached a point that you put in a special order for the type of weather that would keep us from visiting you."

By this time, in light of the aforementioned communications, the tide had almost completely turned toward the notion of an Academy run solely by the District.

The Nebraska Lutheran Academy Board of Regents of 1965 included Pastor W.F. Wichmann, Pastor W.H. Wietzke, Pastor H. Schulz, Mr. Eldon Hirsch, Mr. Donald Raasch, Mr. Melvin Pfeil, Mr. Alton Workentine.

#### 1966

On October 3, 1966, Pastor Gerhardt Haag wrote to the NLA Board of Regents to alert the Board of an offer by a Grand Island firm to buy the Academy site at Grand Island. He felt that the Grand Island property should be kept as the Academy site. To avoid losing the land he warned the Board: "Under no circumstances should the name of the Real Estate Company and/or agent be mentioned to Synod's Board of Trustees.... You know as well as I of many influential brethren in the Synod who stand ready to bury our Academy the first good chance they get!"

In this same letter Pastor Haag also expressed his concern that an Academy in the Arizona-California District could take Synodical priority over one in Nebraska. He wrote: "The Arizona-California District still does not have near the potential of our area. (I speak not only on the basis of communicants and children in Christian Day Schools, but also on the basis of some knowledge of the temperament of the people in the West. There is a difference.)"

It is interesting to note that at this time Norfolk was being considered as an alternate site in the event that the Synod sell the Grand Island property.

### 1967

In 1967 the Synod Advisory Committee on Education was asked to make a thorough study of the Nebraska Lutheran Academy situation and to make a resolution to the Synod in Convention.

At the Synod Convention the Advisory Committee on Education proposed: "That the Synod...rescind its resolutions of 1953, 1955, and 1957 regarding the Nebraska Lutheran Academy."

It was also recommended that the disposal of the Grand Island property be left to the discretion of the Synod Board of Trustees.

Synod voted, "That the status quo with regard to Nebraska Lutheran Academy be maintained until the next Synod Convention."

The NLA Fund, which had been deposited with the Synod Board of Trustees, was to be given back to the Nebraska District to dispose of at their discretion, but "only to the extent that lay within its jurisdiction." Unfortunately, however, that extent of jurisdiction was never specified.

1968

Despite efforts by the Nebraska District to continue to hold the property in Grand Island, plans were undertaken by Synod to sell it.

It was at this point that the Nebraska District began to realize that all hopes of retaining the Academy site were futile; they bowed to the will of Synod.

1969

On September 5, 1969, Arthur Schaefer, Real Estate Manager on the Synod Board of Trustees, sent a letter to the Spelts—Schultz Lumber Company of Grand Island, Nebraska. In it he wrote: "Dear Mr. Schultz, I am now at liberty to advise you that our Synod has resolved to sell the property at Faidley Avenue and Howard Street in Grand Island.... We would probably ask in the vicinity of \$23,000 - \$25,000.

On October 9, 1969, Ronald Tischer, Secretary of the Southern Delegate Conference, wrote to Pastor Eckert, member of the Synod Board of Trustees: "We request that the Fiscal Office of the Synod inform the President of our

District of any planned action regarding the sale of this property, so that any interested member of our District may have the opportunity to make an offer on it."

On November 10, 1969, Gerald Free, Nebraska District President, stated the following in a letter circulated to area Pastors: "The Nebraska Lutheran Academy Board of Control presented the following supplemental report to the 26th Biennial Convention of our Nebraska District: Recommend: That the Academy property be sold by the Board of Trustees of the Synod."

During the 1969 Synod Convention at New Ulm, Minnesota, Synod responded: "That we gratefully accept the recommendation (to have the Board of Trustees sell the Grand Island property) of the Board of Control of the Nebraska Lutheran Academy."

The Synod Board of Trustees, however, upon request of the Nebraska District Praesidium and Visiting Elders, agreed to defer any action on the sale of the Grand Island property until after December 15, 1969.

On November 11, 1969, the McDannel Realty Company of Grand Island estimated the Academy site's fair market value at \$36,000.

During 1969 the Nebraska Lutheran Academy Board of Control was dissolved.

On the local level efforts continued in the hopes that a Lutheran High School might be established in the Nebraska District. During the next few years little was achieved toward that goal.

1970

The Academy property in Grand Island was sold by the Synod.

1971

In 1971 the Southern Delegate Conference of the Nebraska District met at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. They resolved: "That a committee consisting of any number of men be chosen and appointed by the chair." This committee was to seek out and study any and all possible avenues for starting a high school in the Nebraska District. To be studied especially was the possibility of buying the vacant John Pershing College in Beatrice, Nebraska.

At the District Pastoral Conference at Colorado Springs, Colorado, the motion carried "that the President of the District appoint a committee of twelve men, three from each Conference, to make a further study of Pershing College in Beatrice, Nebraska, to draw up the necessary plans, to consult with Synodical Officials with regard to the over-all educational planning of the Synod, and with the permission of the Pastors to present this matter to every congregation."

1972

On January 30, 1972, the so-called "John J. Pershing College Committee" (three pastors and two laymen) met in Geneva, Nebraska. Among their discussions was the

investigation of using working students at the proposed institution to lower costs to students and to decrease operating costs. Since the Adventists used this system, Pastor Haag wrote to W.A. Howe of the General Conference of the Seventh-Day Adventists asking for information about their system of schools. This student-worker system, however, proved to be unfeasible for the proposed Lutheran High School.

1974

In 1974 the Nebraska District Convention resolved: "That we establish a standing committee on secondary education to study and bring recommendations to our Conference and Convention concerning the establishment of an area Lutheran High School in the Nebraska District," and, "That the committee consist of three pastors and two teachers and three laymen who are to be appointed by the Nebraska District President, who shall be an ex-officio member."

1975

On August 18, 1975, the Nebraska District in special Convention adopted the following recommendations:

1. To begin a Lutheran High School Association.
2. To elect a Board of Control.
3. Upon organizing such an Association, the NLA Fund be released to the Association for the construction or purchase of an Area Lutheran High School.
4. That the Association should designate a Sunday in the spring and in the fall, beginning in the fall of 1975, as "Lutheran High School



Sundays," to be observed by each congregation and/or area of our District to strengthen our District in the need for secondary education and to gather offerings for the facility.

On October 25, 1975, the "Nebraska Evangelical Lutheran High School Association" obtained legal status as a corporation.

The first "Lutheran High School Sunday" was observed throughout the Nebraska District on November 23, 1975.

During 1975 the John F. Kennedy College of Wahoo, Nebraska became available for public sale. The Board of Directors offered to buy the college. They put in an initial bid of \$250,000 less campus equipment, or \$300,000 with all equipment. These and all subsequent bids were refused.

Pastor Joel Frank, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Nebraska Ev. Lutheran High School Association, wrote on November 10, 1975: "To this point we have not been successful in our attempts to purchase the facilities of John F. Kennedy College, Wahoo, Nebraska, but that ought not to bring an end to our instructing, praying and giving for the establishment of an area Lutheran High School."

### 1976

By 1976 the sentiments of the Nebraska District at large indicated that one way or another, a Lutheran Area High School would open within the near future. Sensing this trend of thought, the High School Association began

to extend calls in order to secure professors and an administrator for the School. Unfortunately, though, the acceptance of these calls was hard to come by.

Among those who declined a call to the High School faculty were Prof. Jerome Spaude of Saginaw, Michigan; Pastor Westphal of Longmont, Colorado; Pastor Verdell Tassler of Beatrice, Nebraska.

Partly to blame for the difficulty in accepting a call to the Nebraska High School was the stringent Nebraska educational certification requirements. In the instance of Pastor Tassler, for example, it was learned that in order for a W.E.L.S. pastor to have become an administrator at the Lutheran High School, he would have needed to take 23 hours in Professional Educational courses, a major in at least one area which would necessitate another 20-30 additional hours, in addition to having at least three years of teaching and administrative experience.

As far as financial goals were concerned, the Board of Control proposed a target of \$125,000 for the year.

### 1977

On April 15, 1977, the Nebraska Ev. Lutheran High School Association purchased the high school facilities at Waco, Nebraska. The property, appraised at \$600,000, was acquired for \$38,000. The facilities included two classroom buildings, gym and shop buildings, and about 1½ blocks of land.

The High School Association at that time consisted of 167 voting and non-voting members.

Member congregations in the Association pledged \$31,000 per year in support for the High School.

During that year calls to serve on the faculty were extended to Pastors John Brug, Lloyd Hahnke and William Wietzke. All calls were declined.

Elected to the Board of Directors were Pastor James Plitzuweit, President; Mr. Richard Freese, Treasurer; Mr. Earl Heidtke, Secretary; Pastor Glenn Schneider; Mr. Richard Kester; Mr. Albert Richert.

On August 3, 1977, the N.E.L.H.S. Association resolved that each congregation of the Nebraska District appoint or elect a contact man within the congregation for each 50 family units. This contact man would help to keep the congregation informed of the Association's actions, and also relay thoughts and comments to the Association and Board from congregation members.

### 1978

On April 15, 1978, the Association planned to open the High School in the fall of that year for 9th grade only. This plan was not fulfilled.

Plans were undertaken to construct dormitory facilities at an estimated cost of \$300,000-\$450,000.

The Nebraska District initiated a building fund drive call "Feed My Lambs" to help support the High School's expenses.

On August 19, 1978, the following were elected to the Board of Control: Pastor James Plitzuweit, Chairman; Pastor Philip Zarling, First Vice-President; Mr. Richard Kester, Second Vice-President; Mr. Richard Freese, Treasurer; Mr. Earl Heidtke, Secretary.

A call was extended to Teacher Dan Schmeling of Dallas, Texas to be administrator. He declined the call.

On November 24, Mr. Karl Blauert accepted the call to be the administrator of Nebraska Ev. Lutheran High School.

### 1979

On January 27, 1979, Pastor James Plitzuweit accepted the call to Fox Valley Lutheran High School of Appleton, Wisconsin.

On March 21, the N.E.L.H.S. Association unanimously voted to open the High School in the fall of 1979.

On July 23, 1979, the Nebraska State Board of Education granted N.E.L.H.S. probationary approval for the 1979 opening.

The first opening service of N.E.L.H.S. was held on August 28, 1979. Nineteen students were enrolled in grades nine and ten. Of the 19 students enrolled, 10 were "dorm" students who were housed in private homes in York and Geneva. The faculty consisted of three instructors and one part-time instructor, with Mr. Karl Blauert serving as the administrator.

On November 11, 1979, a service was held for the dedication of the facilities owned by the Association, as well as the ground-breaking for a 64-student dormitory.

### 1980

On January 26, 1980, the High School purchased a bus for \$1,500 from the congregation of Beatrice, Nebraska.

On March 16, the proposed budget for the 1980-1981 school year was set at \$170,000.

On August 24, 1980, the opening service was held with 41 students enrolled in grades nine, ten and eleven. The newly completed dormitory was also dedicated.

### 1981

On August 23, the 1981-1982 school year began with an opening worship service. Seventy-three students in all four high school grades were enrolled. Fifty-nine of these students were dormitory residents.

The Faculty was comprised of the following: Karl Blauert, Administrator; Roger Schultz, Richard Everts, Nancy Krueger, Anne Otte, Dean Dawson, Gene Jaeger, Keith Lauber, Anne Richert and Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Johnson, dormitory supervisors.

The proposed budget for the 1981-1982 school year was set at \$263,000.

1982

In 1982, 29 congregations were recognized as having applied for membership in the Nebraska Ev. Lutheran High School Association. Voting authority was transferred to the delegates of these congregations.

Plans were undertaken that year to build another dormitory on the High School property. This structure was to be 80 x 125 feet, housing 68 students. The cost was estimated at about \$200,000.

The proposed budget for the 1982-1983 school year was set at \$364,300.

The Board of Control that year included: Pastor Philip Zarling, Norfolk, NE, Chairman; Pastor Raymond Beckmann, Longmont, CO, First Vice-President; Mr. Albert Richert, Gresham, NE, Second Vice-President; Mr. Earl Heidtke, Hadar, NE, Secretary; Mr. Richard Freese, Plymouth, NE, Treasurer; Mr. Herb Baumann, Grafton, NE; Mr. Herb Mantey, Norfolk, NE; Mr. Robert Kander, Stanton, NE; Pastor Gerald Free, Omaha, NE, Ex-Officio; Mr. Karl Blauert, Waco, NE, Administrator, Ex-Officio.

1983

In 1983, the student body numbered 110 in grades 9-12. The Faculty of N.E.L.H.S. included: Karl Blauert, Richard Everts, Keith Lauber, Gene Jaeger, Roger Schultz, Paul Rakos, Donna Kaye, Anne Otte, Beverly Dornschlegl, Anna Richert.

The Board of Control that year included: Pastor Philip Zarling, Chairman; Mr. Albert Richert, First

Vice-President; Mr. Richard Freese, Second Vice-President; Mr. Earl Heidtke, Secretary; Mr. Robert Kander, Treasurer; Pastor Raymond Beckmann, Mr. Herb Baumann, Mr. Martin Otte, Pastor Gerald Free, Ex-Officio; Mr. Karl Blauert, Administrator.

The proposed budget for the 1983-1984 school year was set at \$416,500.

The High School's total indebtedness was about \$600,000.

On August 13, 1983, the High School Association decided on a 36 to 1 vote to enter into a stewardship drive program prepared by the Synod's Parish Stewardship Services, with Mr. Art Schaffer being the director. The first step was to include a feasibility study and sample presentation of the program to member congregations. Such a program was to include an every congregation visit of N.E.L.H.S Association members. The funds produced by this program were to be applied specifically to the operating budget of N.E.L.H.S. If the sample stewardship program received a 70% acceptance (27 congregations) the complete program would be engaged.

Mr. Art Schaffer conducted his feasibility study September 6-16. He interviewed 16 congregations in all.

Upon completing his feasibility study, Mr. Schaffer determined that the proposed every congregation visit program would not be feasible for the Association. Some of his reasons included "an ignoring of grass-roots

input," and "the lack of a sense of direction as to what the program was to accomplish."

Unfortunately, Mr. Schaffer's findings caused some hurt feelings among Association members. Many lay members of the Association had been instrumental in proposing this stewardship program, and thus they took exception to the remark that their grass-roots input had been ignored. And with a 36 to 1 vote to apply the program's monies to the operating budget, they felt there was no lack of a sense of direction as to what the program was to accomplish.

The Association followed Mr. Schaffer's advice and decided to leave fund-raising programs to the discretion and planning of Association member-congregations. Mr. Schaffer was thanked for his work.

#### 1984

During the school year of 1984-1985, 103 students were enrolled in N.E.L.H.S.

The Faculty included Karl Blauert, Administrator; Beverly Bornschlegl, Eileen Brittain, Richard Everts, Thomas Fricke, Gene Jaeger, Joel Jaeger, Mr. & Mrs. Marvin Johnson, Donna Kaye, Norval Kock, Keith Lauber, Anne Otte, Paul Rakos, Anna Richert.

The proposed budget for the 1984-1985 school year was set at about \$518,000.

The Board of Control included Pastor Philip Zarling, Mr. Albert Richert, Mr. Richard Freese, Mr. Earl Heidtke,



Mr. Robert Kander, Pastor Raymond Beckmann, Mr. Herb Baumann, Mr. Martin Otte, President Gerald Free, Ex-Officio.

On November 25, 1984, the Board of Control decided to expand the Board. They proposed that at each annual meeting held in August, two called workers and two laymen would be elected. They would serve a four-year term, giving the proposed Board 16 members in all. Board membership would then consist of eight pastors and teachers, and eight laymen. Each member would be limited to two consecutive four-year terms.

#### 1985

During the school year 1985-1986, 104 students were enrolled in N.E.L.H.S.

The Board of Control was expanded to 16. Each member could serve two consecutive four-year terms and after a break of one year be eligible to serve again. The Board included: Mr. Richard Anders, Mr. Herb Baumann, Pastor Raymond Beckmann, Mr. Richard Brei, Mr. Richard Freese, Pastor Wayne Hilgendorf, Mr. Randy Hoffman, Mr. Robert Kander, Mr. John Kennedy, Pastor Steven Olson, Mr. Martin Otte, Mr. Bradley Pederson, Mr. Albert Richert, Pastor John Strackbein, Pastor Philip Zarling, Mr. Richard Zeisler.

Advisors to the Board were Mr. Earl Heidtke, Pastor Joel Frank, Pastor Joel Jaeger, Pastor Gerald Free, Ex-Officio.

The proposed budget for the 1985-1986 school year

was set at \$384,000.

The total indebtedness of N.E.L.H.S as of 1985 was about \$650,000. About \$200,000 was owed to the York State Bank and about \$450,000 was involved in member loans.

In 1985 a District-wide fund drive was planned in behalf of N.E.L.H.S.

N.E.L.H.S. has been thriving and enjoying growth and stability. By God's grace the members of the N.E.L.H.S. Association have consistently opened their hearts to provide the necessary funds to operate the school. "The High School Sundays" have also served to promote the school both financially and spiritually.

God's blessings to N.E.L.H.S. have been quite evident. For guidance through the past four decades of hoping, planning and hard work, God deserves our thanks.

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"Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails." (Proverbs 19:21)