Chapter 1

THAT WAS THEN: 1993
It’s Summer, 1993. Spring Quarter is over, and the campus is quiet. Residence halls have largely emptied. Staff are busy closing out the academic year and beginning preparations for the next one. Maintenance workers tend to repairs that are easier to complete with fewer people on campus. Faculty members have read and scored exams, and submitted their end of term grades. Some faculty are around, perhaps getting ready to teach summer classes, but many have scattered for the summer or are working away from campus.

Concordia College is marking a milestone—it was 100 years ago, in 1893, that the school was founded. What does Concordia College look like in summer 1993, at age 100? What buildings make up the campus? Let’s take a walk down memory lane and explore.

We’ll start at arguably the most recognizable Concordia landmark: the bronze statue of Martin Luther. Unveiled during a campus-wide celebration in October 1921, the Luther statue has occupied several locations through the years, but stood in front of the Poehler Administration Building since this building was constructed in 1969-70. Luther measures over twelve feet high and stands on a granite pedestal that itself is six feet high. Gazing out over St Paul’s Dunning Park, which is located to the east across Syndicate Street, Luther has witnessed a lot of changes through the decades.

LUTHER UNVEILED
Our statue of Martin Luther is a replica of the statue of Luther at the Luther Monument in Worms. The statue was designed by German artist Ernst Friedrich August Rietschel. Donated by Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Rubbert and cast by the Flour City Ornamental Iron Company of Minneapolis, the bronze statue of Luther was unveiled in October 1921 to commemorate the quadracentennial observance of Luther’s stand at the Diet of Worms.

DRESSING UP LUTHER
Over the decades Luther has been used (or abused...) by students as a canvas for their abundance of school spirit and pride.
The Admin Building, as it's sometimes called, is a fairly utilitarian, three-story brick structure with narrow, vertical windows, which was dedicated in June 1970. Squeezed into a space between two other, older buildings, Poehler juts out towards Syndicate Street. It houses a large number of faculty offices and departments, as well as the office of President Bob Holst. Faculty fortunate enough to receive an office with a window can enjoy a view overlooking some part of campus.

A tunnel system connects Poehler to the structures on either side, allowing comfortable transit during long winter months. Especially during the school year, a walk through the tunnel—which extends from the Student Union and Hyatt dormitories on Marshall Avenue to the Dining Hall at the north end of campus—can prove interesting. On bulletin boards, but also on walls and doors, one sees a colorful array of posters and flyers advertising a wide range of campus events, club activities, apartments for rent and local businesses. Even though the term is now over, there are still a fair number of these items; some are current while others are outdated.

Standing on either side of the Admin Building, and set back from the street, are two of the oldest buildings on campus: Luther Hall and the Classroom Building. Architecturally, both stand in stark contrast to Poehler. Luther, constructed in 1925 and originally known as the East Dormitory, serves as a residence hall for women students as it has since 1961.

The Classroom Building looks much like a matching bookend to Luther Hall. Completed in 1918 as Recitation Hall (and later for a period known as the Administration Building), it serves as one of the primary spaces for teaching and learning. Virtually all students attending Concordia over the past decades will have had some classes in this building. The top floor has rooms of various sizes; each features ornate wooden doors that are decades old. Pull-down, full-color historical maps, some showing their age, hang on the wall of several rooms. Spaces on this level include a unique tiered classroom.

The main floor of the Classroom Building is a mix of teaching and learning rooms on the west side of the hallway, and several offices on the east side. Human Resources, for example, is housed in one of these offices, and space for the Dean of Faculty is in another. But space here is limited, and some discussions already have been held about finding, or creating, additional room on campus.

**CLASSROOM BUILDING**

Paul Hillmer teaches in the tiered classroom on the top floor of the Classroom Building in the 1990s. Take note of the overhead projectors, rolling audio visual cart, and chalkboards—the technology of the day.
NEW DINING HALL
The Dining Hall was built in 1930. Minus a few updates in the 1950s when the Buenger Memorial Library was constructed, the exterior looked largely the same in 1993. The interior has had a few facelifts to keep up with modern needs and a growing student body.

On the wall, easy to overlook while strolling through the main floor hallway, is an interesting bronze plaque that harkens back to an earlier age, the years after World War I, and reminds the curious observer of another chapter in the college’s past.

Our walk continues north, to the Dining Hall. Completed in 1930 as Concordia’s administration responded to increasing enrollments, the structure now houses student dining facilities upstairs as well as several offices. We exit the building from the main, east door.

Walking east on Carroll Avenue, we encounter the president’s house. Completed in December 1928, the two story structure was first occupied by Martin Graebner, president of Concordia College from 1927 to 1946. These days, President Holst and his wife Lyn reside in the house. The Holsts sometimes host campus event at the house.

Directly east of the president’s house, three large single family houses line Carroll Avenue; a fourth is nearby, and faces Concordia Avenue. Dating to the years before World War II, these have served for many years as residences for CSP faculty and their families. Miriam Luebke arrived at Concordia in 1994 and moved into a Carroll house. She recalls that “living on campus was a great way for me, as a new faculty

FACULTY ROW
The president's house and faculty houses along Carroll Avenue.
member, and my husband to be engaged with things on campus. It was easy to attend ‘after-hours’ concerts, plays and athletic events. Obviously,” recalls Luebke, “it was only a two-minute walk to the office in all kinds of weather, and I could go home for lunch. It was also nice to get to know the other faculty who were next-door neighbors … The group of us in the faculty houses had several progressive dinners where we went from one house to another eating a course at each.”

Concordia witnessed a building boom during the 1950s. This resulted in the Lutheran Memorial Center and Library being added to campus, and also brought three new residence halls, which we now see. Centennial Hall, for women, was dedicated in 1957; Minnesota Hall, also for women, in 1958; Walther Hall, for men, a year later. Wollaeger Hall, nearby, dates from 1964.7

There’s another residence hall too, located on the other side of campus, on Marshall Avenue. Hyatt Village, which opened in 1984, represented a departure from the three multistory 1950s era dorms. Instead, it’s a complex of five units, each designed to house twenty students in four-person suites. CSP students at the time voiced approval of the new space. “There’s a little more privacy, we have our own bathroom, and there are no noisy freshman,” said student Brad Sombke.8

Several other properties, located off-campus, were acquired over the past few decades, to meet increased demand for housing. These include the Martha and Mary buildings, two-story apartments located at the corner of Hamline and Marshall; Dobberful Hall, a three-story apartment structure also located on Marshall; and Moenkemoeller Hall, another Marshall residence.9
Our next stop is Buenger Memorial Library. Completed and dedicated in November 1953, it has served the campus community in the decades since. In addition to books, reference materials and journals, the Library also has an archive collections space and a few study areas. A 1984 remodel added 3,700 square feet to the Library, as well as a computer center, but by the early 1990s the structure appeared increasingly outdated.

The *Sword* has regularly featured student complaints about the Library’s shortcomings. One writer from the student paper pulled few punches: “there are some general concerns regarding the facility itself, some of which are: leaks in the ceiling, poor access to outlets for effective maintenance, drafts during the winter, and lack of adequate storage space.” Charlotte Knoche, for many years Library Director but in the early 1990s a cataloger and reference librarian, complained in a conversation with the *Sword* that “other priorities keep stepping in, and plans for the library are constantly being reshuffled, settling toward the bottom.” Discussions about whether to build a new structure, and when, are ongoing.

Adjacent to the Library is the Lutheran Memorial Center, or LMC. Completed and dedicated in October 1953, the LMC was part of the aforementioned 1950s building boom that saw Concordia add three new residence halls and two academic buildings, as well as classroom space and a chapel. The LMC served for many decades as an auditorium; it contained a stage and a basketball court, as well as upstairs meeting space. Concordia’s basketball and volleyball teams played here through the recently completed 1992-93 school year, and the space was used for intramural sports.
Kevin Hall attended Concordia from 1980 to 1983 and spent many hours in the LMC. “The gym, as we called it, was satisfactory for our humble pursuits. I had attended a high school with no gym of our own—so CSP’s was more than adequate with its even floor, air conditioning (really never too hot during the school year), smooth and gleaming hardwood floor, and, of course, baskets. … My strongest memory,” Hall continues, “was playing [intramural basketball] against a team comprised primarily of football players with limited basketball experience. Our opponents played a game of basketball that appeared to us to be a blend of wrestling and football with a bit of dribbling thrown in for appearances. I was more beat up after playing that one game than in my previous three years of high school athletics.”

The aging LMC, though, simply is no longer up to standard for intercollegiate athletics. Writing in 1993, Concordia student-athlete Ryan Smith called the gym a “Museum of Memories” and concluded that “like all good things, the LMC’s time has come to an end.” But a solution is at hand: work is nearly completed on a new facility at the southwest corner of Hamline and Marshall. As we tour campus today, the old gym awaits redevelopment and a new purpose.

Speaking of construction sites, another one is close by—Concordia is getting a new theater building. Scheduled for completion in 1994, the structure promises to be another asset for the college, and carries high hopes that it will prove attractive to potential students.

Theatre has a long tradition at Concordia, as does music. Some evidence of this is located directly across from the theater construction site: Buetow Auditorium. The dark brick structure,
which is used for numerous campus cultural events, was dedicated during fall of the 1972-73 academic year. Connected to the Music Building, the vibrant red color of the auditorium’s walls clearly places the structure’s design in the 1970s.\(^1\)

Passing through the main Music Building hallway, we exit a south door and are in front of the two-story, concrete and brick Science Building. Located on Hamline just north of the intersection with Marshall, it houses the Science and Math departments, laboratory spaces, classrooms and several faculty offices. Construction began in the fall of 1964, and the building was completed before the start of the 1965-66 academic year.\(^2\) The 1960s-style architecture provides some visual contrast to nearby buildings.

The three-story brick Student Union is located across the lawn, at the corner of Syndicate and Marshall. A student space on this present location had been discussed as far back as the 1960s; finally, in March 1971, the \textit{Sword} trumpeted on page 1 that “something which this campus has dreamed about and has desperately needed, may soon become a reality.”\(^3\) Well, “soon” proved to be relative: it took two additional years of planning and arranging for financing, but in 1973 the Concordia Student Union opened. It is home to several spaces used for congregating or studying, and also available to student clubs

\footnotesize{\textbf{1970s STYLE}}
\footnotesize{(Above) The Buetow Auditorium boasts a Schlicker Organ, gifted to Concordia by Mr. and Mrs. Paul Schilling in 1974. (Left) The Concordia Student Union in classic 1970s decor.}
and organizations.

We walk north on Syndicate to the last stop on our campus tour, the chapel. First erected before World War I as a gymnasium, in 1955 that building was converted into the campus chapel. Some may wonder about transforming a sports hall to a place of worship, but in the 1967 *History of Concordia*, optimism abounded: “Although the gymnasium building was over forty years old, it was still structurally sound, and its shape was such that, with a few modifications and additions, it could be made to appear very churchly.” Stained glass windows and a bell tower, located outside the main entrance, helped with providing the “churchly” appearance. Daily chapel services are held here, as they have been since 1955.

From the chapel it’s just a short walk back to where we started, the statue of Martin Luther. With the new buildings, and discussions about the future of Concordia College, the statue projects a sense of stability, of permanence. Whatever changes may come, at least one can trust that Luther will always be here on this spot.

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**GRAEBNER MEMORIAL CHAPEL**
To convert the old gymnasium into a chapel, a new entrance was constructed. It was originally the back of the building (above) and stained glass windows were installed (below).
REFERENCES


5 Kaden, *Century*, 75.

6 Miriam Luebke, email to author, 22 December 2017. In 2018, Luebke is Associate Vice President for Assessment and Accreditation.


8 Kimberlee Grage, “Hyatt Village – all that glitters may not be gold,” *Sword* 20:1, 1 October 1984, 3.

9 Kaden also describes other properties acquired by Concordia after 1960. In addition to Dobberfuhl, Moenkemoeller, and Martha and Mary, these were Schlueter Hall, 1287 Dayton Ave (1961); and Berger Hall, 316 N. Lexington (1967). See Kaden, *Century*, 22 and 107.


11 Kaden, *Century*, 143.

12 Heather Menten, “A Weakening Backbone?,” *Sword* 29:14, 6 May 1994, 1. Also Heidi Heintz, “Frustration in the Library,” *Sword* 29:5, 12 November 1993, 3. A 1991 letter to the editor complaining about the dearth of materials, signed by several students, concluded that “we students pay a healthy sum of money to attend Concordia College, and maybe that money can be better spent towards buying books – maybe even books from this century.” See *Sword* 26:8, 21 March 1991, 3.

13 Menten, “A Weakening Backbone?”


16 Kevin Hall, email to author, 22 December 2017. In 2018, Hall serves as Dean of the College of Business & Technology.


18 Issues of the *Sword* from 1972 often refer to the structure as the Buetow Memorial Music Center.

19 Overn, *History*, 97; Kaden, *Century*, 105-06.

20 “Student Center Will Become A Reality ...” *Sword* 6:9, 26 March 1971, 1.

21 Quote from Overn, *History*, 93.