

# History of Wallingford and Meridian Park

## Before and After the Construction of the Good Shepherd Center



*Wallingford and Fremont in 1906*

The Home of the Good Shepherd was one of Wallingford's first major buildings. Prior to its construction, Wallingford was a heavily forested area homesteaded as small farms. Heavy development of Wallingford began in 1887 with the completion of the Lake Shore & Eastern Railroad along the north shore of Lake Union. The neighborhoods of Edgewater and Latona, north of 45<sup>th</sup> and west of the I-5, both had their own railway stations and thus developed soon after the railroad's construction.



*Latona Neighborhood 1915*

An electric trolley began operation soon after Wallingford's annexation in 1891. The trolley line enabled workers to live farther from work, spurring residential development between Lake Union and Green Lake. Residential developments soon appeared in the area east of Green Lake and north of 50<sup>th</sup> Street. Between 45<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> Streets, the University Grove and University Hill communities were established.

Construction of Wallingford's gas works along North Lake Union, which supplied manufactured gas for lighting and cooking, began in 1907. With the impending Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition to take place at the University of Washington in 1909, the City of Seattle initiated many improvement projects in Wallingford.

Though not yet paved, many Wallingford streets, including Bagley, Corliss, Sunnyside, Eastern and Meridian avenues, were graded, curbed, and given sidewalks between 1907 and 1909.

Five years after the dedication of the Home of the Good Shepherd in 1907, the neighborhood had significantly developed. By 1920, most lots surrounding the Home contained houses, and by 1946, Wallingford's population had grown tenfold, and 45<sup>th</sup> Street had become a booming commercial hub.

The grounds owned by the Sisters at the Home of the Good Shepherd (today Meridian Park) were extensive. In addition to a pavilion, paved areas for tennis and roller skating, grassy fields for baseball, and a swimming pool, the park also included an orchard for growing fresh fruits, a vegetable garden, and plots to raise cows and chickens. The Sisters also planted shrubbery and flowers, and constructed a goldfish pond. The Home of the Good Shepherd later closed in 1973 and was purchased by the City of Seattle in 1975. In 1977, the landscaped lot was transferred to the hands of the City Parks Department, which has maintained the park since.

"Less than 20 years ago this district was sparsely settled with a few dwellings and a number of small farms. Today it is the home of a population roughly estimated at more than 50,000. It contains as its main business thoroughfare north 45<sup>th</sup> Street which has established a record in development of growth not surpassed by any suburban business street anyplace in the nation. The tremendous business growth and development has come about the last few months... Less than eight months ago business property in the heart of the Wallingford District on 45<sup>th</sup> Street was estimated at a value of \$50 a front foot. Today the same property is changing hands at a value of \$250 per front foot, an increase in value which surpasses... those in the thickly populated centers of Southern California cities and even the Atlantic Coast cities of Florida."

*-The Seattle Times 1925*



*Wallingford Neighborhood 1925*