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Cemetery was tribal ground



Early 1900s map of Huron Place shows the strategic location of Carnegie Library, the forerunner of today's Kansas City, Kan., Public Library.

(Editor's note: This is the 18th in a series of "then and now" articles on places and things of interest in Kansas City, Kan., compiled by area historian Magaret Landis in observance of the 100th birthday of KCK in 1986. Much of the information has appeared in past editions of *The Kansan*.)

(Transcriptions are presented without changes except to improve readability.)

Soon after the Wyandot Indians arrived in 1843 in what is now Kansas City, Kansas an epidemic broke out and claimed the lives of about 60 of their people. They were buried on a hill overlooking the Kansas River.

The hill became the Wyandot Burying Ground, containing two acres, and was named Huron because the Wyandots descended from the Huron Tribe originally from the St. Lawrence River area in Canada.

The cemetery became the "resting place" of persons who figured prominently in local and regional history.

"Huron Place," also known as "Huron Square," is bounded by 6th and 7th streets and Minnesota and Ann avenues. The (plat????) was filled by the Wyandotte City Town Company on Sept. 28, 1859. The property was dedicated as "Public Grounds." Each corner was designated as a "Church Lot" of 150 feet square. "Seminary Place" had a frontage on Minnesota Avenue, Ann Avenue, and 6th Street. The Huron Cemetery was retained.

The churches:

- **Northeast corner** (6th and Minnesota): First Presbyterian Church (built in 1882), now occupied by Commercial National Bank building, built in 1926 to replace the Portsmouth building built in 1892.
- **Southeast corner** (6th and Ann): St. Paul's Protestant Episcopal Church (built in 1882), formerly occupied by the Grund Hotel which was built in 1905 and torn down in 1969.
- **Southwest corner** (7th and Ann): First African Methodist Episcopal Church (built in 1863), now occupied by the Scottish Rite Temple, built in 1908.

- **Northwest corner** (7th and Minnesota): Methodist Episcopal Church (built in 1857), now occupied by the old Security National

Occupying a prominent spot off-center toward the east in Huron Place was Carnegie Library built in 1902 and the forerunner of KCK Public Library which was built in 1966.

In 1855, when tribal relations were dissolved and the Wyandots became citizens of the U.S., one of the reservations made was, "The portion now enclosed and used as a public burial ground shall be permanently reserved and appropriated for that purpose."

Attempts were made in 1899 and 1906 to sell the cemetery for commercial use. Mrs. Lucy B. Armstrong, R.B. Armstrong and the Conley sisters were active in preventing the sale of the cemetery. By 1916, the number of burials had greatly (deceased????). The last burial was February 1965, that of Frank A. Northrup.

A new entranceway to Huron Cemetery, off 7th Street just north of Ann Avenue, was dedicated May 3, 1979. Another improvement is the tablets that tell the history of the Wyandot Indian Nation. The map/tablet shows the Huron-Wyandott migration. The history is now on 10 bronze tablets at the new entrance on 7th Street. Above the tablets are round emblems that symbolize items pertaining to their history.

New bronze markers were placed on known graves that were unmarked and historic markers were added.

Huron Cemetery/Huron Place has been accepted to the National Register of Historic Places. The emblem of the Department of Interior is on the entrance.