

## This Week in Eden History

### May 4 | Cornerstone Laying for Eden Campus



*A large crowd observes the laying of the cornerstone of what is now the Press Building on May 4, 1924. Photo: Eden Seminary Archives*

The corner stone for Eden Theological Seminary's Webster Groves campus was laid on **May 4, 1924**. When its remote Marthasville campus, established in 1850, became cramped, the seminary decided to relocate to Wellston, Missouri in 1883. Its proximity to the Eden railroad stop soon gave the seminary its nickname, later adopted officially. Overcrowding, the cost of upkeep, and pollution from encroaching industries spurred yet another relocation.

The seminary purchased 20 acres of the Reber Estate in Webster Groves on the Lockwood Ave. streetcar line. On Sunday afternoon, December 2, 1923, a thousand supporters attended the groundbreaking ceremony. This level of interest demonstrated that, for most of the Evangelical Synod's existence, Eden Seminary and Elmhurst College were the denomination's most prominent physical representations. The Evangelical Synod had no headquarters or paid staff until 1922.

The Webster Groves campus, the denomination's biggest undertaking to date, created a significant financial burden. Shortly after the first phase of construction was completed (proposed library and chapel buildings were never built), denominational officials feared they would have to sell the campus to pay construction obligations. Fortunately, additional fundraising made the action unnecessary.

The "New Eden" facilities provided more classroom space and individual rooms for students—an improvement over the 40-bed dorm rooms at "Old Eden!"