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Courtesy of Herbert Stortz



Jason Levkulich/DN

Mike Fen and Anne Draper stand by one of Whittier Junior High School's exits. The image would grace Whittier's last yearbook cover in 1977.

While university officials debate its fate, the Whittier building deteriorates with each passing day.

## Whittier school united neighborhood

By Brian Sharp  
Staff Reporter

Closing the former model jr. high school hastens demise of working-class community

Sunday, March 5, 1977.  
On sidewalks throughout Lincoln, chalked messages plead for the life of a neighborhood school. One message reads: "Without a junior high, our community would die."

Tuesday, March 7, 1977.  
The Lincoln Board of Education votes 5-1 in favor of closing Whittier Junior High School.

It was ruled a victim of changing times.

But some neighbors saw it as the final blow from a city that had destroyed their home.

By that time, the city owned more than 80 percent of the Malone neighborhood.

Bancroft Elementary School had been closed.

And now Whittier. Their neighborhood was being

squeezed out. Industry on one side. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln on another. And the city developers were jumping right in the middle.

In 1923, Whittier had opened with a price tag of \$780,000 in the poorer section of Lincoln. It was where the blue-collar workers lived. Where children rarely went to school more than five or six years.

Whittier was heralded as both a local and national model for junior high schools, and would later be mirrored in Irving and Everett junior high.

In his dissertation, James Keill quoted then Superintendent. M.C. Lefler as saying the board chose the Whittier site because, "it was in a poorer section and they figured if it could be built there — thereby have a demonstration of what it would be,

that you couldn't prevent it from going to the better sections of the community — which resulted in exactly the way they figured."

By the 1930s, Whittier was thriving, the Malone neighborhood was a close-knit community and the university was just a small school on the other side of the tracks.

Holbert S. Bradley grew up there. "There was nothing but kids," Bradley said of the old neighborhood.

Malone spread out in all directions, from 14th-to 22nd streets, and Vine-to S streets. And the schools were packed, Bradley said.

Then he went away. Years later, when he came back, what he found was not his home.

"They (the city) took a lot of the community out," he said. "There were no children left."

In the years before it closed, enrollment at Whittier had fallen from 1,250 to less than 300.

Many families had been "relocated" elsewhere in the city. The air base had closed. But those weren't the only reasons for the decline.

In 1969, Goodrich Junior High was opened.

Boundaries were shifted and transfers were easy to come by. Whittier had a reputation by then, an image — and it was a bad one.

To many, Whittier was seen as a rough school, in a declining, industrial neighborhood of low income families and minority children.

But the decisions made by the school board in opening Goodrich were "chief grounds on which federal agencies or the courts frequently charge school boards in civil rights cases," according to an article in the Lincoln Journal, dated March 9, 1977.

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## Birth control doesn't mean STD control

By Angela Jones  
Staff Reporter

While most sexually active young people take precautions to prevent pregnancy, few protect themselves against sexually transmitted diseases. A recent survey by the Alan Guttmacher Institute shows that more teenagers use oral contraceptives rather than condoms.

"Oral contraceptives are a highly effective method of birth control, but they offer no protection against sexually transmitted diseases," said Susan Powers-Alexander, director of Education and Training at Planned Parenthood of Lincoln.

"Teenagers must realize that if they choose to have sex, condoms provide the only protection against all STDs," said Peggy Clarke, president of the American Social Health Association. "While the rate of teenage pregnancy may be stabilizing, the rate of STDs among teens is soaring."

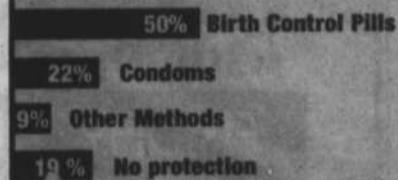
The Guttmacher survey indicates that sexually active young people are twice as likely to choose oral contraceptives as condoms. Of those surveyed ages 15-24, 50 percent use birth control pills, 22 percent use condoms, 9 percent use other contraceptive methods and 19 percent do not use any method.

Two-thirds of the 12 million new STD infections in the U.S. each year occur in people under 25.

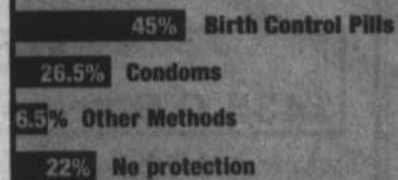
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### Contraceptive Methods of Choice

#### Ages 15 to 24:



#### Ages 19 and under:



Source: American Social Health Association