

# UNIVERSITY PRESS



Fig. 1. The University Press Houses: left to right: 807, 811, and 817 W. Dayton Street, 1995. [Author Photo, AP-20]

The University Press was founded in 1937 under the direction of Miss Livia Appel. It was housed that year in Bascom Hall. It moved in 1939 to quarters in the old library school at 811 State Street. In 1955 The University Press moved across to 430 Sterling Court (a north-south street between State and University vacated for the construction of Humanities). This was the Press's home until forced in 1965 to leave by the demolition of Sterling Court which made way for the Humanities Building. They moved into the old houses at 807 and 811 W. Dayton Street. These houses had been purchased by the Wisconsin University Building Corporation in August 1964 (807 W. Dayton) and February 1962 (811 W. Dayton). The WUBC leased the properties to the University for amounts required to amortize the purchases. 817 Dayton was used in 1965 by the school of music. After the opening of the Humanities Building in 1969, it was occupied by the UW Press.<sup>1</sup>

There were several reasons for selecting this location for the University Press. Although a department of the graduate school the Press tries to support itself financially. Sadly it has never managed to do so, running a substantial deficit from the beginning. Therefore it was undesirable to place the Press in expensive quarters. In addition the nature of the Press's business requires a warehouse, and it happened that the WUBC had purchased the General Beer Distributor's warehouse at 415-417 North Murray Street in January 1962. This proximity of a warehouse and office space was a natural choice for the new home of the UW Press.

The current house at 817 W. Dayton replaced a much earlier one. Members of the Law family, who produced architects and mayor James Law and his brother Edward lived in the house for 40 years. This house contains the periodical functions of the Press.

The oldest of the three houses is the one at 811 W. Dayton. It appears in the 1902 directory as



Fig. 2. University Press Warehouse, 1995. [Author Photo, AP-21]

a family home, and passes through several hands, including congressman John M. Nelson, before its purchase by the WUBC in 1962 from Donald and Lorraine Tobias. It houses the editing and marketing arms of the Press.

The largest house, 807 W. Dayton was the most recently built, first appearing in the 1914 directory. By 1920 the house was the property of the Endres family and stayed in the Endres family until its sale to the WUBC in 1962. This house contains the administrative offices of the Press.<sup>2</sup>

The warehouse is sixty by seventy feet of two stories and a basement, and was built in 1927 by the Trachte Brothers for Mautz Paint and Glass. Mautz sold the property in 1937 to Max Weinstein. Over the years a number of one story additions have been made to the rear of the building. The property included the building and a adjacent parking lot. Weinstein and other members of his family formed General Beer Distributors in 1945 and the warehouse was used by this corporation until the death of Max Weinstein in 1951 at which time the warehouse was appraised at \$45,000. The Weinstein family sold the warehouse to the WUBC in January 1962 for about \$190,000. The WUBC immediately transferred the title to the regents. The University Press uses the warehouse for shipping, receiving and storage. The bookkeeping function are also housed in offices in the warehouse, as is a small store that sells the books distributed by the University Press.<sup>3</sup>

The University Press has not been especially happy in its Dayton Street quarters. Two major objections are periodically voiced. One is that the old houses are inadequate to the task of housing the staff and their work. The second is that the quarters are old and shabby and make the Press look like a poor step child of the University. Suggestions have been made to house the Press in the University club, and in the old bank building at Park Street and University Avenue. Plans for the construction of the Kohl center may require the relocation of the University Press.

1) *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine*, January, 1950 p. 10-11;

2) University directories; Madison city directories.

3) Papers of the regents in regent's vault, deed folder 457. *Regent's Minutes*, January 5, 1962.