IT took ten years to do it, but the Oklahoma Memorial Union Building is now complete. Every room of the present unit (the original plan contemplated the addition of a wing eventually) now has its permanent interior finish. For the first time, no University classes are being held in the Union. Every inch of space is now devoted to student and alumni and faculty service.

The $400,000 plant meets almost every kind of non-classroom need of the student body, and also is used extensively by alumni and faculty. That the Union is appreciated by those it serves is shown plainly by the fact that every bit of space in the building is used, and used almost constantly. Every few days the Union management has to turn down requests for office space for campus organizations and activities, and even has to turn down many requests for meeting space for campus groups.

In spite of the depression and other serious difficulties, the Stadium-Union bond issue which financed the construction of Memorial-Stadium and the Union has been in default only once, and the original schedule of bond and interest payments was soon resumed.

Unless some totally unforeseen event interferes, the present financial program will retire the last cent of indebtedness on the Stadium and the Union on April 1, 1943, only five years from now.

The early days of the Union were stormy ones. Here's the way things went during the school year 1928-29 when the building was erected:

September 18—A group of students protested the University's collection of a Union fee, although it had been approved previously by a student vote.

November 22—Union building was opened for student use.

January 1—Union departments showed heavy loss for first month's operation.

January 10—Formal opening of building held.

January 10—B. S. Graham, who had been director of the Stadium-Union campaign, resigned as manager of the Union.

January 19—Suit filed in district court by students to prevent collection of Union fee by University.

January 31—Manager of billiard room arrested by city officers on charge of

Above, the new office of Ted Beaird, '21, Union manager and alumni secretary. Center, the new pine-paneled recreation room of the Union; and below, the new group meeting room which seats 70 persons and is constantly in demand.
Complete -- After Ten Years!

operating pool tables without city li-
cense. February 1—County assessor an-
ounced effort would be made to collect
ad valorem taxes on the Union building.
One by one the troubles were ironed-
out. The small groups of students pro-
testing the Union fee lost their suit in
district court, but appealed. In 1933 the
State Supreme Court, by unanimous de-
cision, upheld the right of the Board of
Regents to collect the fee. The ruling
stated: "The requirement that each stu-
dent pay a $2.50 Student-Union fee each
semester is not prohibited by any constitu-
tutional or statutory provision, and is
within the implied power of the Uni-
versity Board of Regents."

Management of the Union was taken
over after Mr. Graham's resignation by
Frank Cleckler, '21, who in 1928 had
been made executive secretary of the Uni-
versity of Oklahoma Association. He
worked out the administrative problems
of operating a cafeteria, a ballroom, a
billiard and bowling room, a news stand,
and other student services.

The building had been only partially
completed in 1928 because of insufficient
funds. The main lounge was left with
bare concrete and tile walls. The south
wing of the main floor had to be left
unfinished, and temporary wallboard
partitions were put up so that the space
could be used for University classrooms.
Even so, the use of the Union increased
steadily, and by 1936 a careful check of
the number of persons entering the Union
in one day showed more than 6,000 en-
trances. A check now would undoubtedly
show a great many more.

At one time in the depths of the de-
pression, Mr. Cleckler faced default of
bond payments. It had been expected or-
iginally that football receipts and pay-
ments on the approximately $650,000 in
Stadium-Union Fund pledges would meet
a large portion of the bond retirements,
but revenue from both of these sources
almost stopped for a time. A bond pay-
ment went into default and Mr. Cleckler
faced the fact that any bondholder who
wanted to could go into court and throw
the Stadium-Union project into receivers-
hip. Alumni and Stadium-Union of-
cials held worried sessions and finally
worked out an agreement with the bond-
holders for a part-payment schedule
which satisfied them. Later when fi-
ancial condition of the Stadium-Union
fund improved, the original schedule of
bond retirements was resumed.

Another near crisis was faced by Mr.
Cleckler in 1931 when the State Legis-
lature decided to investigate the Union.
Gambling in the pool room, and general
unfair competition with Norman business
houses was charged against the Union.

High point of the investigation, so far
as public attention was concerned, came
when a student witness put on the stand
to testify about gambling in the Union
stated that he had heard another student
in the pool room say, "I'll bet you a
dime I'll put the nine ball in the side
pocket."

Walter Harrison writing in the Okla-
ahoma City Times razzed the investiga-
tion for disclosing such a "sink of in-
iquity."

He commented further:

All of this about the Student-Union
Building at Norman is without
Judging from the statements of the merchants
in Norman, the Student-Union is responsible
for the price of cotton, the limited proration in
the Oklahoma City oil field and the price of
bread. There is no other cause for depression in
and around Norman except the Student-
Union with its cafeteria, its billiard hall, its
book exchange, where students can get text
books at cost.

The Student-Union is the poor boy's fraternity
home. It is accepted as a worthy and necessary
part of the well established University through-
out the land. Some colleges call it the com-
mon, others a club, still others a union—but
its objects and furnishings are the same every-
where. They kick about it being established on
land that belongs to the University. Why shouldn't it be? It is as much a building de-
voted to the service of the student body as
chemistry hall, and is used a much greater
portion of every working clay and night and
Sunday too.

Long may the Student-Union wave.

After hearing thirty witnesses and
studying much documentary evidence, the
Senate investigating committee reported
that it found no irregularities in the
Union, and that the finances had been
handled in a judicious manner.

"The proof further shows," the com-
mittee reported, "that Mr. Raymond Tol-
bert and numerous others of the alumni
have given a great deal of their time and
means in attempting to carry out the en-
terprise and that they diligently worked
without hire or expense.

"The committee after hearing the tes-
timony of various students as well as the
president of the University is of the
opinion that the Union is serving a most
useful purpose and has answered a great
eed of the school, not only in furnish-
ing a general center of supplies for the
student body, but also in serving a
general melting pot for the fraternity and
non-fraternity groups, thus serving to
promote a more democratic atmosphere."

In recent years the Union has been
generally accepted as an essential and
important institution on the campus, and
its use has increased steadily.

The completion of the physical plant
has proceeded step by step. The Me-
morial Tower was placed on the build-
ing in the school year 1935-36 as a WPA
project at a total cost of about $30,000.

The barn-like space originally in-
tended for the main lounge was finished
as a fine oak paneled lounge with com-
fortable and beautiful furnishings in the
winter of 1937-38, and as part of the
same project, the old alumni and Union
office space was converted into two din-
ing rooms, the Woodruff Room and the
English Room, and the offices on the
west side of the south wing of the main
floor were finished. This project, also
done with WPA help, cost about $27,000,
including the furnishing of the lounge.

The final step in completion of the
building was taken this summer when the
large room across the south end of
the main floor was made into an attrac-
tive recreation room, and the east side of
the south wing was completed. This
space is devoted to offices for T. M.
Beaird, '21, alumni executive secretary
and Union manager; Mrs. Mary Turn-
bull, in charge of the Teachers Placement
Bureau; and an attractive paneled meet-
ing room with space for seating seventy
persons.

This final project was completed in
September, and involved a total expendi-
ture of about $15,000 including WPA
help.

The completion of the physical plant
and furnishings was not accomplished
easily. Mr. Cleckler worked out financ-
ing of the tower project after a long struggle.
When Mr. Beaird became Union
manager in 1936, with Homer Heck,
'35ex, as assistant manager, he started at
once to seek money to complete the
lounge.

Eventually he was able to borrow
enough money from alumni, faculty
members and friends at the University
to put up the sponsor's share of a WPA
project. Notes were given, to be retired
from receipts of the Stadium-Union Fund.

The last project was carried out on a
similar basis, and the financial details
are working out satisfactorily.

Mr. Beaird and Mr. Heck, although
devoting much of their time to comple-
tion of the building, have also put great
emphasis on a program of increased ser-
vice to the student body. When the
lounge was completed, Miss Margaret
Anne Gessner, a graduate of Knox Col-
lege with special training at Northwestern
University in the field of recreation
work, was appointed director of activities
in the Union, and she has sponsored
musical concerts, art exhibitions, free
dances, and many other social and cul-
tural programs that have been enjoyed by

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The realization of a dream dating as far back as 1916, but the World War nipped that effort. When the large frame building used by the Y. M. C. A. burned in 1922, a group of students and University officials decided to try for a Union instead of trying to rebuild the Y. M. C. A. That same year, Ben G. Owen, then head of athletics, started a campaign for a stadium, but this first effort was unsuccessful. It was decided that a joint campaign would be held to raise $1,000,000, of which $650,000 would be for a stadium and $350,000 for a union.

Frank Buttram, Oklahoma City, was national chairman of the campaign, J. S. Buchanan, as president of the University, was associate chairman. R. W. Hutto, Norman, was treasurer, and is still treasurer of the Stadium-Union fund. B. S. Graham, now of Oklahoma City, was director of the campaign.

Members of the Stadium-Union Board of Trustees—men who have devoted much time and effort to the financial affairs of the Union—are as follows: Neil R. Johnson, Norman, president; Dr. W. B. Bizzell, Norman, vice president; R. W. Hutto, Norman, treasurer; Frank S. Cleekler, Muskogee, secretary; Emil R. Kradilt, Dr. E. D. Meacham, Ben G. Owen, Dr. V. E. Monnett, and R. H. Cloyd, all of Norman; E. R. Newby, Tom F. Carey, Raymond A. Tolbert, and B. S. Graham, all of Oklahoma City; Chester H. Westfall, Ponca City; Robert H. Wood, Tulsa, and A. N. Boatman, Okmulgee.

What of the future? The situation is that the completed first unit of the Union is already overcrowded. There are many legitimate demands for space that can not be met. If the present trend continues, it seems inevitable that the construction of the wing, which was a part of the original plan, will have to be seriously considered.

Additional space for a cafeteria which would be separate from a fountain service room is badly needed. The present combination cafeteria and fountain room does such a steady business all day and into the evening that it is difficult even to keep the place properly swept and cleaned. More space is needed for offices of campus organizations. A small auditorium suitable for concerts, plays, lectures and forum meetings is a definite need. More small dining rooms are needed for faculty and student lunches and dinners.

Most of the leading Unions in the nation now provide workshops in which students can develop hobbies such as woodworking, photography, leather and metal work, and other constructive uses of leisure time. These would be facilities suitable for use of the amateur and hobbyist, instead of the professional type of equipment used in the various schools and colleges for professional instruction. Many educators have come to believe that development of constructive methods of using leisure time is just about as important for young people as classroom instruction, insofar as insuring happy lives is concerned.

These are things to work toward in the future. Meanwhile, alumni can join with students rejoicing that the present unit of the Union has been completed down to the last bit of plaster and the last nail. The Union is performing a big job on the O. U. campus, and performing it well.