A Student Shock Absorber

Oklahoma Union to be Meeting Ground for Undergraduates

When Sooners return to the campus for the homecoming game November 10 between the University of Oklahoma and the University of Nebraska, they will see the materialization of what to many loyal students seemed a dream—a student union building.

Between October 15 and November 1, workmen will complete the work on the building, and then preparations will ensue for the reception of returning Sooners during homecoming.

During that fortnight, the basement will be opened, and $50,000 worth of equipment will be installed. All of the building, however, will be open for homecoming.

The building is built in a style similar to the Collegiate Gothic of the old administration building, of red brick and white stone trimmings. Entering the building, you first approach the basement, with its big cafeteria, its billiard tables and book exchange. You reach the main floor by a broad stairway. Here are the offices of the University of Oklahoma Association, where Secretary Frank S. Cleckler will conduct the business of the association, and where the advertising and business offices of The Sooner Magazine will be established.

On the main floor are the women’s lounge, the memorial reading room and the men’s lounge and smokeroom. The latter will remain unfinished for some time, but it will be used despite that.

A spacious ball room is on the first floor, extending the height of two stories. On this first floor are the offices of the student council and other student organizations. A number of committee rooms open on the general student office, and these may be assigned for the meeting of student clubs. Desks will be provided for each of the campus organizations given space in the building.

On the second floor are the residence rooms. Seventeen rooms are provided for alumni and former students and for university visitors. These will not be furnished at this time. Temporarily, they will be used for the pastry and bake shop.

Inability to secure materials delayed the completion of construction on the building, being erected by Bailey & Burns, Norman contractors at a cost of $235,000. The cost of the completed structure will be $350,000, but certain portions of the building will have to be left uncompleted because of lack of funds.

Actual building of the student union was made possible by floating a $400,000 bond issue, to be divided between the new stadium and the union. The bonds will be retired by payments on the $650,000 sum pledged to the student-union fund by graduates and former students.

The business of the student union is controlled by an alumni board composed of R. W. Hutto, Norman, Raymond Tolbert, Oklahoma City, Claude Monnet, Oklahoma City, Ray Evans, Shawnee, Luther White, Tulsa, Q. E. Boydston, Sallisaw, and Frank P. Douglass, Oklahoma.

B. S. “Cheebie” Graham, who came to the university Y.M.C.A. from the flying fields, is manager of the student union building, and the man who was at the helm during the trying days when Sooners set about to raise a million dollars to build it and the stadium.

The book exchange, in charge of Charles Miles, ’22 arts-sc., will remove from its present cramped quarters in the old science building to the basement of the student union building.

The cafeteria will be managed by Mrs. Etta Coulter Green, formerly of the Tulsa Y.W.C.A. It will have 236 chairs and will be able to serve from 1,000 to 1,500 at a meal. The equipment, said to be the most modern available, cost $30,000.

A soda bar will be an innovation of the student union—something more than a soda fountain, according to Graham.

The stadium, when the new section is completed, will seat 32,000 persons. The new wing will be complete by October 15, it is planned. The dressing rooms for the athletes under the west wing, costing $40,000, are complete and will be in use at the start of the football season. The university’s radio station WNAD will broadcast the Norman-played football games.

The stadium-union idea, long discussed on the campus, became a reality following the destruction by fire of the Y. M. C. A. building in 1922. Eugene Faulkner, a former student, had long advocated a union building, and the Y.M.C.A. fire furnished the opportunity for arousing wide interest in the plan, which found ready and aggressive

WHERE VISITING FOOTBALL TEAMS WILL BE “ENTERTAINED”

Football devotees of the University of Oklahoma will find a different scene at Owen field from that which has greeted them in previous seasons, for Reinhart and Donovan, the contractors on the new wing of the stadium, have practically completed their job. The east wing, supplanting the bleachers of last year, will make the total seating capacity of the stadium 32,000. Adequate dressing rooms have been completed for the teams, while WNAD, the Sooner broadcasting station, will have facilities at the stadium. The new wing was financed through a $400,000 bond issue jointly with the Oklahoma student union building.
Among students and alumni.

Hortibly after the opening of the fall semester, there appeared in a leading column of the Daily Oklahoman a story that a "storm" had broken at the university, students having protested paying a $2.50 student union fee. A reading of the story did not substantiate the glowing promise of the headline, however, for the "storm" was merely a tiny whirlwind, one student having protested.

To supply the background for this "storm," it is necessary to recall the steps leading up to the authorization of the fee. The ninth state legislature permitted the university to lease to the Oklahoma student union the ground on which the building now stands for a period of ninety-nine years, on payment of $1 annually. The union was incorporated as a public corporation, non-profit making. Responsible for the building itself was the board of governors that concluded the lease with the state.

It was early decided that the union should be operated by and for the students of the university. Last spring, the students in an election authorized the university to collect a fee of $2.50 a semester to be applied to the operation of the union. If a student had made a pledge to the union, such payment was to apply to his pledge.

It was also arranged that the union should be governed on the campus by a non-partisan committee, of which the vice-president of the student council would be the chairman.

The story in the newspaper caused a slight furor. The president of the university said that the fee would not be collected from students who could not afford to pay it. The Oklahoma Daily declared editorially: "By far the finest building on the campus with the exception of the new library, the Oklahoma union is a monument to student life in the University of Oklahoma. Students who protest against the fee evidently lack interest in the group life of which they are a part. There is no way to separate those who are sociable and those who enjoy solitude. The truth is, however, that once the union is opened, the few who protest against paying for it will doubtless be the first to use its reading rooms, its cafeteria, its recreation rooms, and its dance floors."

An enterprising student or townsman at about this time "slipped over a fast one" on the union. A person signing his name "Gavin Miller" wrote a reply to the Daily's editorial. The letter was published under the assumption that it was the product of a bona fide student. Later, no "Gavin Miller" could be found on the university's registry books, nor was the language that of a mere student.

Said "Miller": "According to your editorial, 'the Oklahoma union is a student owned, operated and controlled building.' According to a recent statement of President Bizzell the student union is owned by a private corporation. The building has been erected upon land leased from the university for a period of ninety-nine years by a private corporation. It is being built with student money yet it is owned by a private corporation. If the union building is to be paid for by the students why should a private corporation reap the profits of the concessions it will contain? . . . .

"The editorial is right when it left the impression that the student union is a popular move. But its popularity is due to a gross misconception on the part of the student body. It is the common belief among the students that their money is going into the erection of a building which they may use as their own. When they discover that they must pay more for the use of the dance hall than they pay for one erected at no expense to them; when they realize that the profits from the concessions which they have made possible revert not into public funds but goes into the pockets of the stockholders of a private corporation; when they discover that the few alumni who have promoted the union have, alone, profited from a building paid for by student money, the 'storm' of which we now hear the rumblings will sweep from its path the few individuals who are to profit from the student union at the expense of the student body.

"It is a wonder to me that the promoters of such a scheme have been able to so successfully hide its true nature. How they accomplished it I cannot say. But I do know that on two different occasions when a conference was gained with the alumni who is at the head of the private corporation to whose interest and financial gain this building has been erected, that he has refused to make any statement informative or otherwise, as to the nature of the student union."

To this, Graham (not an alumnus of the university) replies that the corporation is not a private corporation but a public one; that the control is vested in the student body; that the auditing and direct financial control of the union remains in the hands of the alumni board of control, elected by the student council to serve a term of seven years, and that the employment of the manager and his appointees must be approved by the board.

Soooner Nominees

The political training on the University of Oklahoma campus that a number of Sooners received has stood them in good stead since they joined the ranks of brendwiners, judging from the number of graduates and former students who received nominations in the state primaries held early in the summer.

Two Sooners, now congressmen, were renominated by their respective districts. They are Wilburn Cartwright, '20 law, incumbent for the third congressional district on the Democratic ticket, and Jed Johnson, ex-'15, incumbent for the sixth district on the Democratic ticket.

Several Sooners were nominated for the state senate. These were Clarence Johnson, '13, pharmacist, Republican, for the thirteenth state district, Harry Jolly, ex-'10, Democrat, for the fifteenth district, Dave Boyer, ex-'20, incumbent, Democrat, for the seventeenth district, Mac Q. Williamson, ex-'10, incumbent, Democrat, for the seventeenth district, W. G. Stigler, ex-'16, incumbent, Democrat, for the twenty-seventh district, and Virgil E. Riddle, '17, arts-sc., Democrat for the thirty-second district.

Nominees for the house follow:

Democrats—Louis Fischli, '20 law, Carter county; C. C. Hester, ex-'15, McClain county; Richard H. Cloyd, '19 arts-sc., Cleveland county; Q. B. Boydston, '19 law, Muskogee county; W. B. Gibson, '25 law, Garvin county; Phil Kramer, '19 law, Tulsa county; Knox Byrum, '27 law, Pottawatomie county; Owen Black, ex-'19, Comanche county; David M. Logan (incumbent), '16 arts-sc., Okmulgee county; L. C. Gadberry, '20 arts-sc., Canadian county; and John M. Bell, '15 arts-sc., Kay county.

Republican—Herman E. Lautaret, '21 law, Cleveland county.