

Nebraska's stadium is now debt-free

Memorial association closes books for stadium account

The Nebraska Memorial association, the group that built and paid for the stadium, closed its books Thursday night. The group which was incorporated by law March 9, 1923, to build the state's memorial to its war dead, has been dissolved.

It was at a meeting in the office of the alumni secretary that a resolution was signed dissolving the never-to-be-forgotten association, and steps were taken to cancel the \$55,000 in notes held by the association against the Nebraska Athletic Board of Control. This was the sum the athletic board owed the association for the completion of the stadium.

Significance of the proceedings is apparent to every loyal Cornhusker and especially to those over the country today who had a part in the building program of the stadium. For this was the small incorporated group which alone was largely responsible for giving to the institution more than a million dollars in equipment, buildings and improvements.

Brings new field house

With construction of a field house at the north end of the stadium under way the memorial association felt that the athletic board had more than fulfilled its commitments to the finishing of the ends of the bowl and that it should therefore be relieved of all further financial obligations to the association.

As Vincent "Stub" Hascall of Omaha, president of the alumni association who presided over the meeting declared, "The time has come for the alumni association to get out of the stadium business."

Out of stadium business

The idea was unanimous, and the meeting of the memorial association, the athletic board and other interested parties was held in the alumni office. At that time, Hascall pointed out that the association had long ago performed its service and should therefore dissolve itself from all further responsibilities.

At the culminating conference Thursday night, Hascall submitted a resolution drawn by Dean H. H. Foster of the Law college dissolving the association, and with a second by Max Meyer of Lincoln, and a unanimous vote of approval, officers of the Nebraska Memorial association wrote "finis" to its career, and the word "cancelled" was written across the face of the remaining athletic department notes. These bear the signatures of Hascall and E. F. DuTeau, alumni secretary, certifying and attesting to the cancellation.

The success story

Those whose names will go on the record of this memorable meeting are: Vincent Hascall, Secretary DuTeau, Max Meyer, Judge W. W. Wilson and Harold Holmquist.

The dream, campaign and ultimate completion of the stadium is a success story unparalleled in the annals of the university and the state. The undertaking was developed and carried on by Nebraskans in typical Nebraska fashion. No indebtedness was left to linger on the records. Like the capitol, the stadium was paid for before it was built, so to speak.

Been attempted once

Although an earlier attempt to build a stadium and a gymnasium had failed because of unfavorable economic years, the campaign for the present concrete stands, which got under way the summer of

1922, was a success from start to finish.

Many share in its success, but today, Harold F. Holtz, who was secretary of the alumni association from 1921 to 1929, is recognized as the man most responsible for its consummation. It was Holtz who was placed in charge of the campaign and who successfully guided the subscription program to its completion—a job which was done in less than the allotted time.

And the money?

So that construction might get under way immediately, the memorial association was incorporated and a bond issue floated amounting to \$300,000. These bonds were to be liquidated by subscriptions from students, faculty, alumni and friends of the institution which according to records were apportioned as follows: students, \$106,995.50; medical college students at Omaha, \$5,465; faculty, \$23,557.75; Lincoln, \$176,441.76; Omaha, \$35,251.50; Lancaster county, \$60,416.68; out of state, \$23,472.

As further security to the bonds, a clause in the agreement provided that the athletic board should pay to the association \$20,000 a year to cover interest during the life of the bonds, and the cost of collecting the pledges.

Record sale

Although the bond issue was for five years, zealous and loyal Cornhuskers had the bond debt removed in less than the allotted time. It was another feather in the hat of the Nebraska public, for the local stadium campaign was probably the first major drive of its kind to "go over the top," at least in this short span of time. Today when Nebraskans note the struggles of other institutions to pay their stadium debts, the work of that small band of campaigners becomes the more appreciated.

Just about complete

Originally, it was decided to enclose the two ends of the great stands with a colonnade. Later, however, desiring to give the athletic department as many seats as possible, it was agreed to spend all the money for the enlargement of the stands. Now with addition of the new field house at the north end of the structure, it is considered architecturally complete by both the memorial association and other interested groups.

Although Holtz, and his campaign assistant, M. I. Potteet, did the actual job of organizing the undertaking, their efforts would have been futile without the help and inspirational support extended by students, alumni and friends.

Those on work roll

Well remembered is the work of Judge E. B. Perry of Lincoln, who was president of the association at the time, and who was called upon to draw up the articles of incorporation. His assisting officers, who went to make up the committee in charge contributed a good deal of time and effort to the completion of the articles. All were members of the executive committee at large.

W. L. Bates of Kimball, then a regent, was named chairman of the building committee. Others serving were Ellery Davis, Clyde Dempster, and Arthur Dobson, who later became chairman of the committee. Robert H. Manley of Omaha donated his services as publicity chairman and edited a well remembered booklet entitled,



—Journal and Star.
VINCENT HASCALL

"We Will Build the Nebraska Stadium in 1923."

Worst playing field

"There never was a team that wore the Nebraska uniform that was not worthy of its alma mater, but in all those years there never was a Nebraska field that was worthy of its team," wrote Manley in his plea to Nebraska followers. "Nebraska today has the proud distinction of the greatest football team and the poorest field of any college of standing in this entire section. Will this affect the schedule for 1923, and later years? Will this make it easy to arrange games with teams of the Big Ten? You as alumni are not responsible for the team, but you are responsible for the field."

On the purse strings

Then there was R. E. Campbell, who accepted the job of finance



—Journal and Star.
ELLSWORTH DU TEAU

chairman, and his assistants, all of whom did much to crystallize the campaign in general.

John Selleck, business manager of the athletic department, looks back with considerable pride in the success of the undertaking. Although claiming no credit for his part in the job, he and the other members of the athletic staff feel more than gratified with the \$500,000 gift which was presented to them.

Manley's plan for more adequate facilities helped materially in mobilizing sentiment in favor of the new stadium, says Selleck, who came into office in 1921, just as the campaigning was beginning, worked tirelessly toward the end.

Too big!

Many will remember that the only question on which there was



—Journal and Star.
HAROLD F. HOLTZ

not unanimity of agreement was the size of the stadium. When the final plans were adopted various groups felt that the memorial association had shown poor judgment and was foolishly building beyond its most urgent needs.

But, as Selleck points out, there was some reason for those protests. The old wooden stands seated but 6,000. The proposed structure would accommodate 30,000, providing five times the seating capacity. It was little wonder then that even some of the most ardent followers looked askance at the building committee's recommendations. They pointed out that only once in the history of the old wooden stadium had the seating capacity been taxed to the limit, and this was for the last game ever played on the east-west field—the thriller of Notre Dame.

Notre Dame victory

Both Holtz and Selleck admit today that this surprise victory over the famous four horsemen and the unexpected triumph over Pittsburgh earlier in the season supplied the current which sparked the stadium drive to its rapid conclusion. After these victories against the two top ranking teams of the nation, Nebraska fans were willing to go the limit in providing players with a stadium and field the equal of any in the country. Before this psychological stimulus had died down, Holtz and his campaigners had pushed the solicitation program over the goal.

Contract signed

The contract for building the stadium was signed in 1922 by Judge Perry as president of the memorial association; Holtz as secretary; L. Bates as chairman of the building committee; and by the officers of the Parsons Construction company. Within a year it was finished.

Dedication of the stadium took place when the university entertained the Kansas Jayhawks. Preceding the game there was a short service participated in by students, alumni, and representatives of the building association.

Today, almost two decades after its completion, the \$500,000 investment which is represented in the stadium, stands as testimony to the courage and faith of loyal fans and alumni. Without the stadium Nebraska athletics might still be in the pioneering stage. Intra-mural activities would be limited; adequate facilities for the promotion of student health would be lacking; and the important service program being carried on by "Biff" Jones and his staff, would be impossible.

Financially speaking...

Financially speaking the stadium has been a money maker for

THEY SAY...

President—Hascall—"I am glad that this action has been consummated. We have been working toward this end for two years, and today we have returned the stadium to its proper owners, the Athletic Board of Control."

Secretary DuTeau—"It has been a long process and I, too, am glad the books are closed on the memorial association. Whatever credit the Alumni association deserves for the whole thing may be problematical but Harold Holtz spent years of his secretaryship on the stadium campaign, and certainly the Alumni association was regarded as the solicitor, much to the disadvantages of its own membership promotion. We have the stadium, the books on how it came about are closed, and today the final chapter in its history has been written."

Harold F. Holtz—"To have shared in this enterprise and to realize now what this first big undertaking has made possible is a satisfying memory."

the athletic department. Mr. Selleck admits that it has been responsible for three-quarters of a million dollars of athletic plant developments these last few years. Revenue from increased attendance at bigger and better football games has enabled the department to build and pay for the new \$500,000 Coliseum, the much needed intramural fields at the north of the campus; and to begin construction of another university dream, a Field House.

The Field House

To cost approximately a quarter of a million dollars, this new building will provide an indoor practice field, locker and shower facilities, training quarters, and additional rooms for athletic programs.

As for the stadium proper, few individuals realize that it is one of the most widely used buildings on the campus. The west stands house most of the university's major plants while such sundry things as running tracks, huge storerooms and offices are found in the cavern-like depths of the east side.

But most of all, the stadium, more than any other project, has made possible the development of Nebraska athletics on a scale only dreamed of in years back. With its ability to accommodate more than 40,000 spectators, the stadium has



—Journal and Star.
JOHN K. SELLECK

enabled the management to effect much desired relationships with the major institutions of the country. The earlier predictions of a few stout-hearted boosters have become a reality. Today, the stadium is an accepted institution.

New Field House will complete stadium building program

