Nebraska History posts materials online for your personal use. Please remember that the contents of *Nebraska History* are copyrighted by the Nebraska State Historical Society (except for materials credited to other institutions). The NSHS retains its copyrights even to materials it posts on the web.

For permission to re-use materials or for photo ordering information, please see:
http://www.nebraskahistory.org/magazine/permission.htm

Nebraska State Historical Society members receive four issues of *Nebraska History* and four issues of *Nebraska History News* annually. For membership information, see:
http://nebraskahistory.org/admin/members/index.htm

Article Title: "Give 'Till It Hurts": Financing Memorial Stadium

Full Citation: Michele Fagan, " 'Give 'Till It Hurts': Financing Memorial Stadium," *Nebraska History* 79 (1998): 179-191

URL of article: http://www.nebraskahistory.org/publish/publicat/history/full-text/NH1998MemorialStad.pdf
Date: 3/01/2013

Article Summary: Memorial Stadium was a major construction project requiring significant resources in the 1920s. Students, alumni, and state residents were strongly encouraged to contribute even though Nebraska was just then experiencing an economic depression.

Cataloging Information:

Names: Harold Holtz, E J Stewart, Roscoe "Dusty" Rhodes, Samuel Avery, John J Pershing, John Latenser, Ellery Davis, Vincent Hascall, Guy Reed

Nebraska Place Names: Lincoln

Keywords: Memorial Stadium, Nebraska Alumni Association, Harold Holtz, Nebraska Memorial Association, Nebraska Soldiers and Sailors Memorial, Samuel Avery, Parsons Construction company

Photographs / Images: architect's sketch of the proposed War Memorial building that evolved into Memorial Stadium; architect's rendering of the stadium; Stadium Building Committee; stadium fundraising brochure; Chancellor Samuel Avery breaking ground for the stadium, April 26, 1923; earthwork beginning for the stadium; the last game played at old Nebraska Field, November 30, 1922; the stadium under construction; sign indicating freshmen's contributions to the fundraising campaign; unfinished east grandstand at the Nebraska-Kansas game played on October 20, 1923, the day the stadium was officially dedicated

"GIVE 'TILL IT HURTS"

FINANCING MEMORIAL STADIUM

By Michele Fagan

People say that on many Saturday afternoons in the fall Memorial Stadium on the University of Nebraska campus in Lincoln is the third largest population center in the state. Along with the state capitol it is one of the most recognizable buildings in Lincoln, and the two actually have several things in common. Both structures are memorials to the servicemen and women of World War I. Hartley Burr Alexander, chair of the university's Philosophy Department, chose the inscriptions for both.[1] The stadium and the capitol were major construction projects, requiring significant resources just when Nebraska was experiencing a serious economic depression. It is a tribute to Nebraskans' persistence that they were completed.

Getting the stadium constructed, however, took immense effort and involved serious financial risk. The credit for seeing the project through goes to the University of Nebraska Alumni Association, especially to Harold Holtz, its executive secretary, and to all the subscribers, willing or not. The stadium was built without state funding and its construction depended on money pledged and then paid by university students, staff, alumni, and well-wishers.

When the University of Nebraska football team played its first game in November 1890 against the YMCA team in Omaha, the campus boasted only a grandstand and bleachers. After the turn of the century sports enthusiasts, alumni, faculty, and students hoped for something more impressive.

In 1918, after the United States had been at war with Germany for several months, the student newspaper, *Daily Nebraskan*, encouraged its readers to call for better sports facilities for "this important part of college education." Football Coach E. J. Stewart emphasized how much college athletics helped prepare young men heading for army or navy training camps.[2]

The war, of course, slowed building projects on campus, but when hostilities ended in November 1918 work resumed on the Social Sciences and Teachers College buildings. The university's Board of Regents strongly supported more construction, and placed a new gymnasium, observatory, museum, and library at the top of the list in the budget it presented to the state legislature. The student newspaper backed the budget request, noting that Nebraska taxpayers and legislators spared "no expense for housing and providing for livestock." They should treat the students equally by providing for their physical and mental development. Naturally it hurt to learn that the Iowa State Aggies had refused to send their basketball team to Lincoln to play in the Cornhuskers' "little brick barn," and this snub further fueled arguments for better athletic facilities.[3]

When the university celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1919, it needed a new gymnasium and stadium, it wanted to honor its servicemen, and it had an alumni organization willing to be more active. These goals and needs eventually melded together with the formation of the Nebraska Memorial Association.[4]

The university had 2,300 stars in its service flag, representing alumni, students, and faculty who had joined the armed forces during World War I. More than one hundred had lost their lives. Gen. John J. Pershing, who led the American Expeditionary Force, was a former military science instructor at Nebraska and had received a degree there. The goal became a permanent memorial to remind Nebraskans of the sacrifices these individuals had made for their country.

In March 1919 the "N" Club members proposed a memorial for Roscoe "Dusty" Rhodes, captain-elect of the 1918 football team who had been killed in France. They considered a new gymnasium, a playing field, or a memorial tablet. The *Daily Nebraskan* editor thought that the gymnasium or field would be much more worthwhile than a tablet.[5]

When the Board of Regents asked the official university architect, Charles Hodgdon of Chicago, to submit sketches for a possible gymnasium, its construction looked imminent, at least to the students. Chancellor Samuel Avery asked Hodgdon to hold the plans "to a reasonable size." One of the "athletic people. . . . Dr. Stewart is . . . an inflationist of the first rank."[6]

Sentiment in favor of a gymnasium or stadium hardened in the university community. In January 1920 a committee working on a memorial met with Alumni Association officials to discuss a joint effort. The *Daily Nebraskan* fervently supported this idea on the grounds that an athletic building would be the most fitting thing "to build the physical and mental life of young people."[7]

Michele Fagan is head of University Archives and Special Collections at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Her previous Nebraska History *articles have dealt with the history of nursing in Nebraska.*

Enthusiasm ran high and the Nebraska Memorial Association, composed of alumni, although not officially part of the Alumni Association, was formed to begin fundraising. In March 1920 Guy Reed, a 1911 graduate, became chairman of the Nebraska Memorial Association's executive committee and Vincent Hascall, class of 1912, the executive secretary.[8]

The Nebraska Soldiers and Sailors Memorial was projected to be an impressive complex with a museum for public and private collections of artifacts related to the various wars Nebraskans had participated in, a stadium, a gymnasium, and an assembly room for veterans' gatherings. Rooms were designated for the permanent headquarters of the Grand Army of the Republic, the American Legion, the Spanish-American War veterans, and other groups. The focal point of the structure would be a rotunda with friezes of battle scenes. Avery wanted a plaza with small parks scattered throughout in front of the memorial building, and Regent John R. Webster called for a broad street in front of the gymnasium. The memorial was going to be a monument to all Nebraskans who had served their country.[9]

The new association wanted to raise $1 million to build a combination gymnasium and stadium. Members decided to begin the subscription campaign during the week of May 17, 1920. Supporters in Lincoln and Omaha were expected to come up with $200,000, respectively. People all over Nebraska would give the rest.[10]

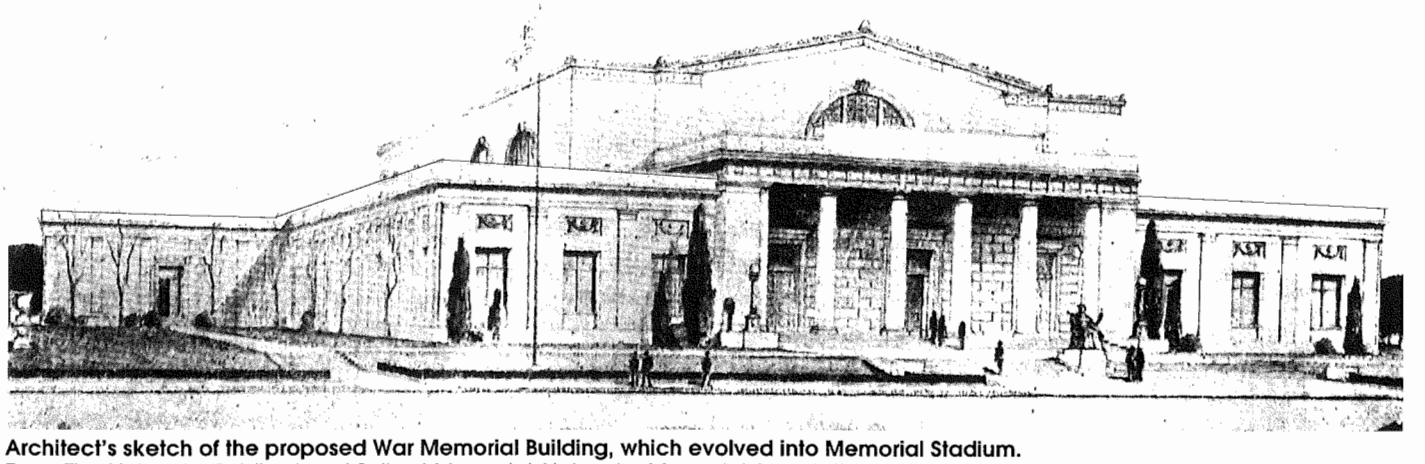
The university community also hoped for state help. Chancellor Avery believed a legislative appropriation would have to supplement whatever money the fundraising brought in. He did not think individual subscribers would give all the necessary funds, "but if we make a good showing the legislature will supplement it."[11]

The campus fundraising began officially on May 20, 1920, when classes were dismissed for two hours so students could attend a special convocation at which Chancellor Avery, Guy Reed, and various professors spoke, and the band played. For several weeks before the campaign on campus actually began, students had been urged to "give 'till it hurts." Organizers asked the students with automobiles to help canvass in Lincoln.[12]

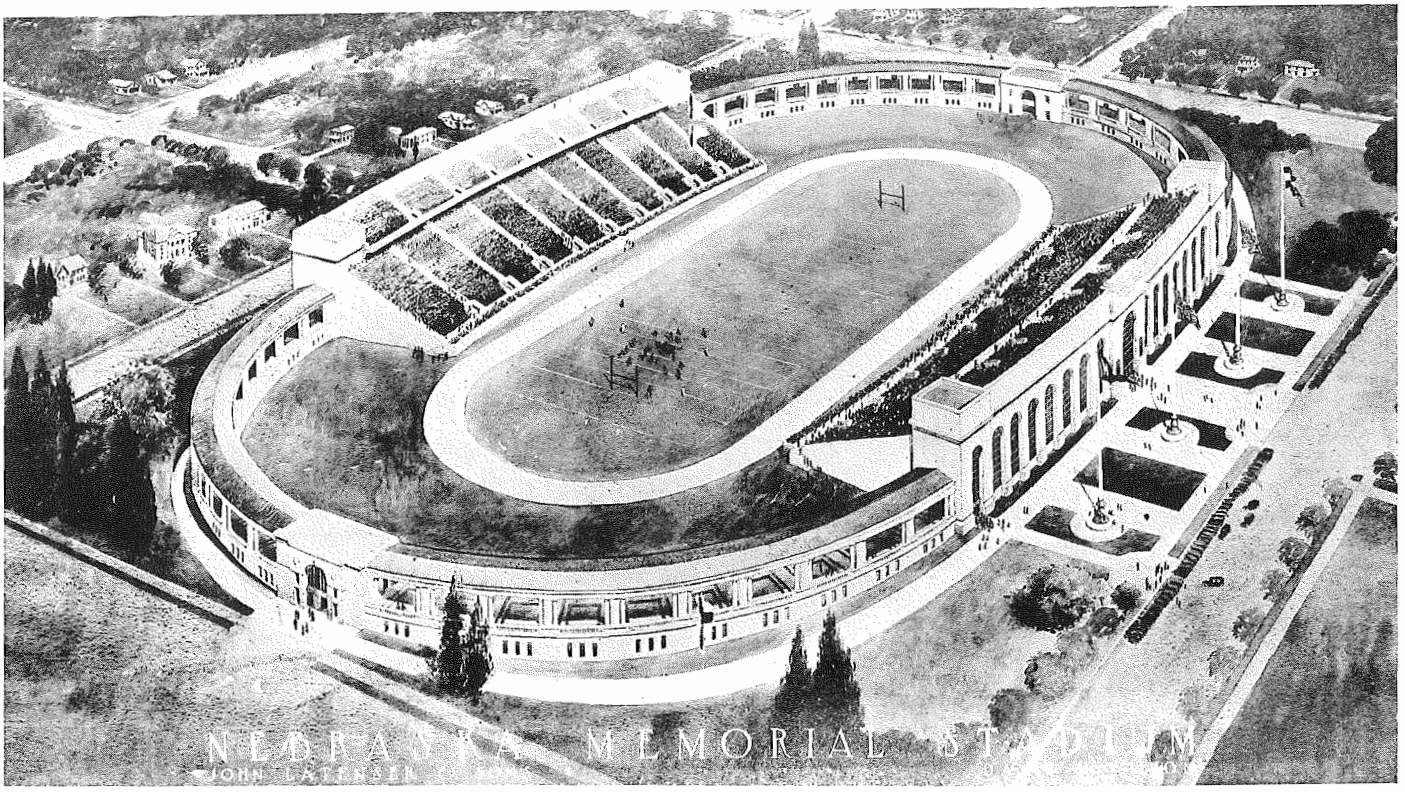
In early June 1920 the Lincoln and Omaha campaigns began. The Lincoln press reports were upbeat. When questioned about memorials being planned elsewhere in the state, Executive Secretary Hascall emphatically stated, "Not a community has been approached but has been enthusiastic and promised its quota in a short time." Campaign backers said public sentiment was on their side, and the $87,000 in subscriptions received from just fourteen of the twenty-five districts proved it. These expectations, however, were overly sanguine.[13]

In the real world outside the newspaper stories, the fundraising drive was in trouble. A faltering economy and resistance from certain groups in Nebraska hampered it. Even as the Nebraska Memorial Association was establishing committees in each county to solicit subscriptions, letters came in telling of hard times, low crop and beef prices, and the animosity of some local editors, American Legion chapters, and bank managers.

In Schuyler the local editor, R. H. Adams, opposed the idea of a stadium, although he was dissuaded from writing a negative editorial. The town had already raised $5,000 for its own monument. In and around Valentine, "people have been through a long, hard winter. Last fall our cattlemen were bumped hard on the market and owing to our dry summer the farmers' crops are short." In Albion the banks were discouraging "all kind of collections and trading to get people back to earth again." Managers of the town's two oldest financial institutions were "fully



Architect's sketch of the proposed War Memorial Building, which evolved into Memorial Stadium.
From *The Nebraska Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial*. Nebraska Memorial Association Papers, University Archives/Special Collections, University of Nebraska-Lincoln



Architect's rendering of Memorial Stadium. From *We Will Build the Nebraska Stadium in 1923.* Nebraska Memorial Association Papers, University Archives/Special Collections, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

against raising this money." Some people liked the idea of a stadium or gymnasium but thought the state legislature should fund it.[14]

Some Nebraskans approved of a memorial, but they wanted one closer to home. Tekamah residents had raised several thousand dollars to purchase a building for the American Legion, and they "would rather give that much more for something which would be local and could be enjoyed by all rather than give a cent to be placed in a memorial at Lincoln." In Nance County, "the American Legion is making a big kick on the Nebraska Memorial drive. . . . They are working for a building of their own and think that it will injure their chances of putting it across if they push the [university] drive at this time." Local businessmen "are standing with the local boys." The same was true in Hastings, where the American Legion post was "unanimously adverse to any such campaign in this county because they want to save all the thunder they have for their own campaign." In Saline County some believed the ex-soldiers should be consulted and people "are inclined to question whether it [a stadium] would be the most advisable [memorial] for the soldiers out in the state." Local people had already collected $15,000 for a building in Crete. "We hardly believe the sentiment either of the soldiers or civilians is back of the program you propose."[15]

In the face of such resistance, the campaign ground to a halt. Perhaps the Nebraska Memorial Association had not allowed itself enough time to get organized. The reply of W. W. Dayton, the chairman appointed in Saline County, suggested that neither he nor his committee had learned of the project until they were informed that they were the committee. Some committee members may not have pressed for donations as hard as they should have. Vincent Hascall, for example, thought that donating "should be a spontaneous contribution from the people of the State, activated by a patriotic motive." Given the lack of advance planning, and the competition from other memorial projects, the goal of $1 million for the grand complex was unrealistic.[16]

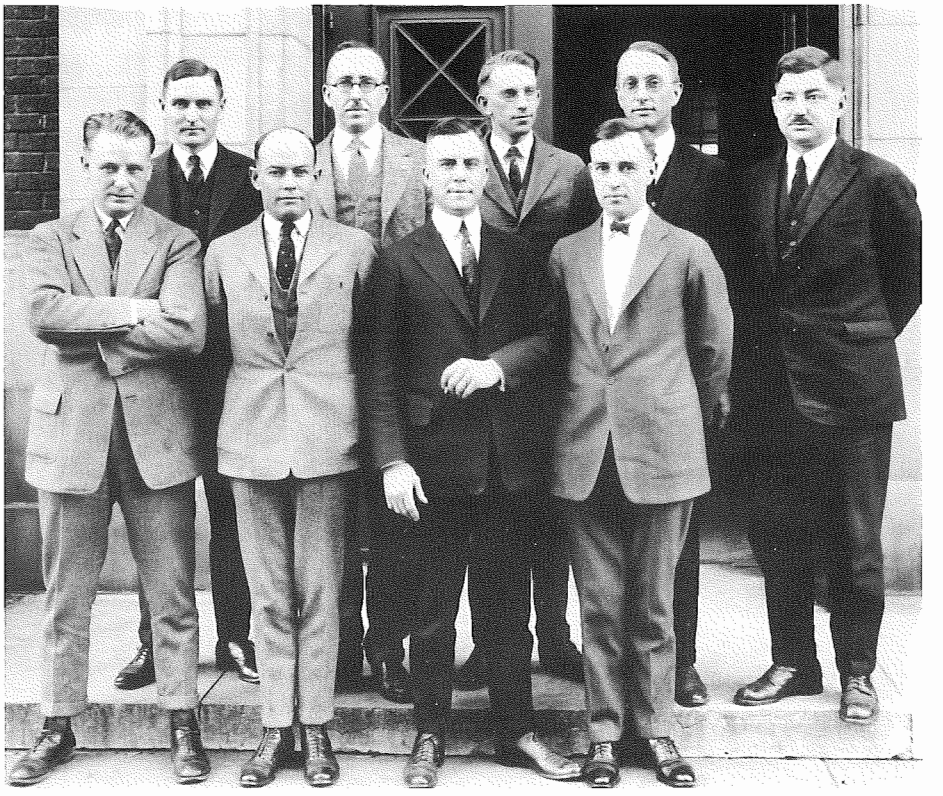
Originally Chancellor Avery, the alumni, and the Board of Regents hoped for some state funding. The Regents requested $350,000 in the budget request to the legislature. A matching sum would be raised through subscriptions. Governor Samuel McKelvie and the legislature agreed to set aside $250,000 for the stadium and gymnasium. Gen. John J. Pershing applauded this news during his speech at the university's 1921 commencement, tell-

ing Chancellor Avery "to put me down for my share, sir."[17]

An agricultural depression hit Nebraska in 1921 when wartime high prices, government price guarantees, and foreign demand all disappeared. The economic situation "ultimately dominated and overshadowed all else." By August 1921, when the economic depression really began to be felt, the governor ordered all state agencies, including the university, to set up a special reserve fund with 10 percent of the state appropriation, which could not be spent without the governor's approval. Soon Chancellor Avery gathered his faculty together to decide what could be cut from the university's budget.[18]

In October 1921 Harold Holtz, the newly elected secretary of the Alumni Association, decided to terminate the 1920 fund drive and reorganize the county committees. On campus the Innocents had already reported that the spring of 1921 was not a good time to ask the students for money.[19]

Further damage to the fundraising prospects came when the governor called a special session of the legislature in January 1922 which, among other things, reduced the university's

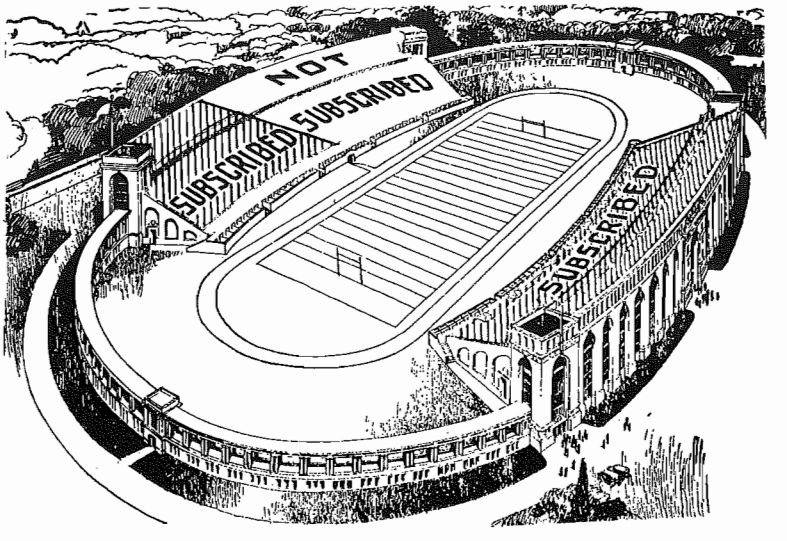


The Stadium Building Committee: (Front row, left to right), **Fred T. Dawson, university football coach; W. L. Bates; Victor B. Smith, president of the Alumni Association; Ellery Davis, architect.** (Back row, left to right), **Arthur Dobson; E. L. Stancliff; Harold F. Holtz, secretary of the Alumni Association; Samuel Rees; John Latenser, architect.** NSHS-RG2758:21-2

ARE YOU 100% NEBRASKAN?

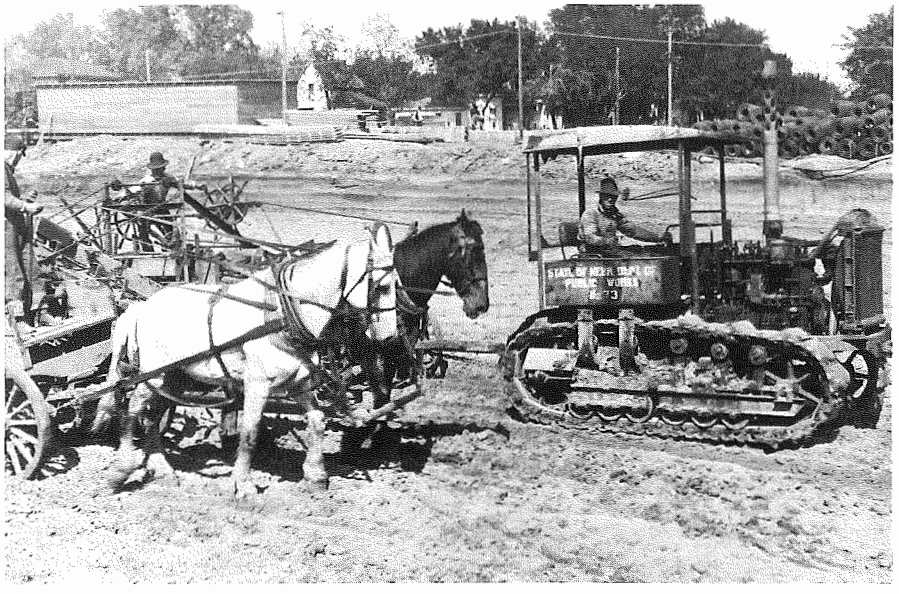
One half of the Nebraska Alumni (together with the students, faculty and friends) have subscribed three-fourths of the amount necessary to erect the $450,000 Stadium. The other half of the Alumni can complete the Stadium *if they will.* We believe they are just as prosperous and just as loyal as those who have subscribed.

Will you help?



Stadium fundraising brochure. Nebraska Memorial Association Papers, University Archives/Special Collections, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Chancellor Samuel Avery breaking ground for Memorial Stadium, April 26, 1923.
NSHS-RG2758:21-3



Earthwork begins for the construction of Memorial Stadium, 1923.
University Archives/Special Collections, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

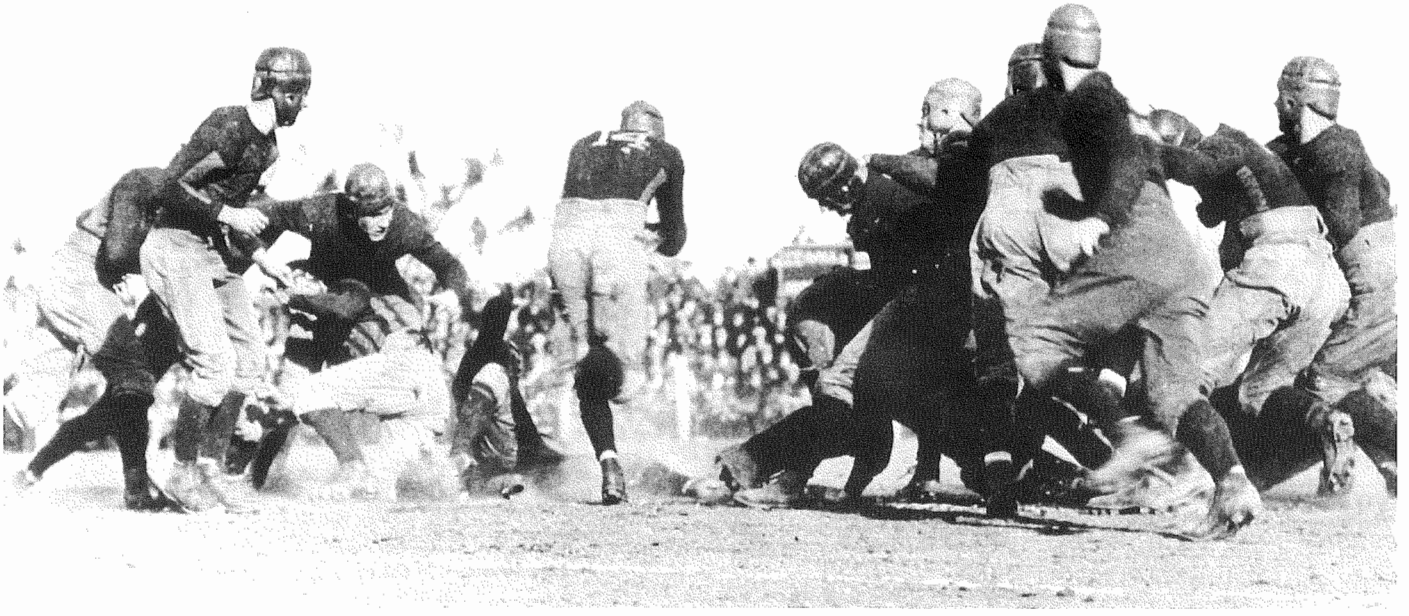
appropriation by half. The legislature went one better and cut stadium funding from the budget altogether.[20]

The university lost this money, in part, because the state budget had become a political issue just when the school had a rapidly growing student body and started asking for more money. Both Governor McKelvie, a Republican, and his successor, Democrat Charles Bryan, stood for fiscal retrenchment. Given Nebraska's economic situation, voters liked the sound of this. Some of them had already been complaining that the university was becoming too large and too expensive.[21]

Disheartening as these developments were, planners in university circles still carried on with the memorial idea despite the bad economic situation and the lack of state funds. On April 7, 1922, the Board of Regents turned over responsibility for stadium fundraising to the Alumni Association. The original Memorial Association transfered all its books, a little over $14,000 in cash, and more than $100,000 in pledges to the Alumni Association. This would be the group's biggest project since it was organized in 1874.[22]

This time the Alumni Association executive committee would directly oversee the fundraising. To enable the Association to collect money, the executive committee incorporated as a separate nonprofit organization in March 1923, again using the name Nebraska Memorial Association. The new Memorial Association could buy and sell property, collect money, and sue.[23]

The new Nebraska Memorial Association set lower, more realistic goals. Instead of trying to raise $1 million, it aimed for $450,000. The gymnasium-stadium combination with a museum, meeting rooms, and friezes became just



The last game played at old Nebraska Field was a Nebraska victory over Notre Dame on Thanksgiving Day, November 30, 1922. NSHS-RG2758:102-29

a stadium. The new association may have hoped to get something similar to the first grand plans, "but after the bids were opened, it was reduced to a cold, practical question of adjusting the structure to the amount of money available."[24]

During the transitional period from one Memorial Association to another, the architect had also been changed. Hodgdon of Chicago was replaced by John Latenser of Omaha and Ellery Davis of Lincoln. The new architects were Nebraskans, and they had gone to the university, although Latenser did not receive his degree there. Both men donated their professional services as their contribution to the stadium project. Harold Holtz, secretary of both the Alumni Association and the new Nebraska Memorial Association, calculated that those services were worth between $15,000 and $18,000.[25]

Holtz was a 1917 Nebraska graduate, who had been active in the Pershing Rifles and chosen for membership in the Innocents Society, a group of senior men selected for their character and leadership ability. During World War I he had trained as an aviator and served on the Austrian front. He would be a major force behind the new stadium drive.[26]

Holtz first found out who were the graduates and former students in each county. He believed that the first committee had not asked as many of the alumni as possible to contribute, and he was not going to make that mistake again. As executive secretary of the Alumni Association he proposed a new, updated alumni directory and relaxed membership requirements. Before this time people who attended but did not graduate from the university were not eligible to belong to the association. Now they could be members, would be listed in the directory, and would definitely receive pledge requests.[27]

Holtz appointed a chairman for each county and began sending these people the names of current students, ex-students, and graduates. Each county had a financial quota determined by the number of resident graduates there. The payment plan called for 20 percent down and 10 percent every six months. Campaign workers were told to put on a confident front—act like a pledge would be "a matter of course." Holtz had a follow-up system for collecting pledges that would "not let procrastinators get away." He wanted the whole campaign run like a business venture. He often told students and others that he would "keep right on every delinquent account," and that the pledge was a "plain business proposition that confronts us all."[28]

Fremont, with a $2,000 quota, demonstrates how a county or town was organized. The city campaign started off with a banquet at the Hotel Pathfinder. Perhaps because the stadium would be a war memorial, the newspaper described the organization in military terms. The chair had an "able staff of officers." J. C. Cook, the "commander and chief of the Dodge County squad," attended the banquet. Fremont had been divided; Earl Lee was the general of division A, "General Lee's Army." His teams elected captains and lieutenants. "The alumni of Dodge

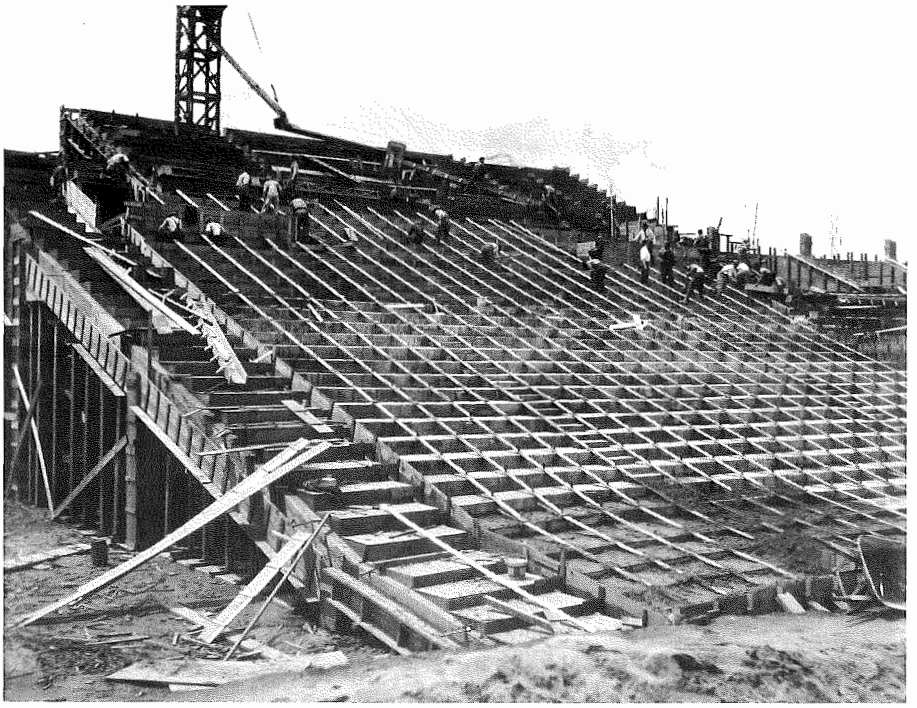
County does not mean to be among those who failed to contribute toward the progress of its alma mater."[29]

Some chairmen and campaign workers wanted something in return for their labors—football tickets. One of the campaign workers in Nebraska City could not get tickets for the 1922 Notre Dame game and she was furious. Like some other people she sent in the money for tickets but her check was returned. "They are getting awful sore. They say Lincoln is playing the hog as usual, taking all the tickets and leaving none for the rest of the state." In Pender "four of the boys here who are enthusiastic football fans want to go to the game and they insist that they will not take part in the stadium drive unless they get some tickets."[30]

Donors also expected favorable treatment. A Lincoln man who gave $100 "will gladly accept hereafter the privilege of making reservations ahead of the general public." Owners of the Crete Mills worried they would lose their place on the list for advance ticket reservations because they had paid their subscription.[31]

The financial problems and opposition that plagued the fund drive in 1920 had not disappeared by 1922, and could make the county chairmen's jobs difficult. In Garden County the "Beet Sugar Company and the railroads have skinned this County of all its years' profits." In Broken Bow a man "stirred up such a rumpus in regard to the new stadium . . . he has created a hard feeling all over this county." The area around Bridgeport was "hard hit by the financial depression," and many businessmen could not collect money owed them. "Every day or so somebody turns his stuff in to the bank and skips the county, leaving his creditors holding the sack."[32]

Mother Nature and bad roads kept some county organizers and solicitors from getting a quick start. The worker assigned to Cass County was ready to go as soon as the roads there dried. In Cheyenne County the weather made it impossible to get out into the county immediately.[33]



Memorial Stadium under construction in the summer of 1923. NSHS-RG2758:21-7

Lincoln businessmen greeted the stadium drive with open arms. In fact, the Chamber of Commerce worked as the soliciting agent for the Alumni Association to meet its $150,000 quota. Many members had probably attended the university, and the proposal looked like a good business opportunity. They were not unmindful that a stadium would contribute "to the welfare of all the interests in the city . . . [more] than any other thing that has come into our life." The citizens oversubscribed by $15,000. Familiar corporate names appeared among the large donors, including Woods Brothers for $5,000 and Miller & Paine for $10,000.[34]

The Omaha drive, on the other hand, caused grave concern. In April 1922 the Regents and several Omaha men met to discuss a strategy. Holtz often complained that the city's fundraisers were not doing anything. In February 1923 he pressed the organizers to get everything done before Creighton University started its fund drive. Holtz reported to the Board of Regents and Chancellor Avery that he had been "extremely disappointed in the campaign in Omaha. We are informed, however, by Regent F. W. Judson that the balance . . . will be raised, but the delay in this matter has been extremely embarrassing." In April he urged Judson to finish the Omaha drive; "The amount which we have been expecting from Omaha is the amount which stands between having the stands for our football season this fall," or not having them.[35]

Around the state the drive did receive support, sometimes from unexpected sources. Many counties and towns subscribed their quota. Some even oversubscribed, like Clay Center, where chairman Charles Epperson, Jr., reported that most of the donors were businessmen who had not gone to the university, "but this is a great football town."[36]

Cy Sherman, the Lincoln sportswriter who named the football team the Cornhuskers, contributed. So did alumni like George Flippin, a former football team member and first African American player, and Karlis Ulmanis,

who had returned to his native Latvia and had become that nation's prime minister. A winning football game made one fan enthusiastic enough to increase his total donation to $1,000 "because of the very good work done by the team this day."[37]

Edwin Squires from near Broken Bow donated two pigs he was raising. The animals "will doubtless be auctioned off at the Syracuse game." Inmates belonging to the State Penitentiary Dramatic Club staged a performance for the general public with the proceeds going to the stadium fund. "Because of the kindness of the University to the Penitentiary, the inmates felt that they really owed this much." High schools and at least one grade school donated money. Lincoln schools, of course, gave, but so did those in Beatrice, Aurora, North Platte, Edgar, Wilber and Pender.[38]

On campus the Innocents Society had charge of organizing the drive among the students, but the Alumni Association also planned to get pledges from faculty and staff. The faculty and staff were encouraged to pledge a percentage of their salaries to the stadium fund. L. F. Seaton, the operations supervisor and purchasing agent, canvassed all the Physical Plant employees. Pledge commitments followed staff even though they had left the university, as one faculty member who moved to the University of Arizona found out.[39]

In October 1922 the Innocents set about tapping the student body by talking to the presidents of the fraternities, sororities, and the honor societies like Mortar Board or Silver Serpents. Student leaders strongly encouraged each president to make a big sales pitch to the members of his or her group and challenge them to reach their quota before any of the others.[40]

The campus drive organizers counted on each student pledging $25, payable over two years, for a total of $90,000. Two hundred campaigners set out with a goal to approach every student. They worked in pairs and were told that the results were what counted. Canvassers also

A feature of the freshmen fundraising campaign, October 1923. NSHS-RG2758:21-1

had to report on the outcome of each contact. The student fund drive netted $112,000 in subscriptions.[41]

The Nebraska Memorial Association promised that home games would be played in the new stadium in the fall of 1923. When enough pledges had been subscribed, although not all had been collected, the association risked letting contracts. Parsons Construction Company of Omaha would build the stadium. The firm bid $548,849, which was "more than $100,000 above the amount now available," forcing the Memorial Association to eliminate some features of the plan until more money could be raised. Colonnades inclosing the north and south ends and a tower section in the east stands were eliminated, but the seating capacity of 30,000 was not reduced. Roberts Construction of Lincoln received the grading contract. All excess dirt would be sold to the Lincoln school board.[42]

The construction schedule called for Parsons to finish the concrete and steel work on the west grandstand 120 days after starting, and on the east grandstand within 130 days. The wooden seats would be installed thirty days after the stands were finished. The company kept to its schedule and must have had university students in its work force. Holtz was gratified "to know that a great deal of the actual work on the stadium was done by students who were working their way through school."[43]

On April 26, 1923, at the stadium groundbreaking Chancellor Avery turned the first earth ceremoniously with a plow and team, "throwing the reins over his shoulder in true dirt-farmer fashion." In June the cornerstone-laying was the highlight of the second Cornhusker Roundup of the alumni, even though the weather did not cooperate. L. W. Parwick of Lincoln donated the cornerstone. A severe wind marred the ceremonies by blowing down the "frame holding the service flag back of the speakers," causing "much commotion." The flag fell on the key speaker, Bion Arnold, an 1897 graduate of the university's engineering college.[44]

On numerous occasions Holtz stated that none of the students had been coerced into pledging, but the peer pressure must have been tremendous. A former fraternity president recalled "the exuberance of fraternity spirit . . . when our fraternity, the same as the others, was endeavoring to make the biggest possible subscription to the stadium." He subscribed for several members and was left to pay the entire pledge.[45]

During the 1922 campaign one student said he could not afford $25, but he could give $5. When he received his receipt, he discovered that he was credited with a $25 pledge and still owed $20. Alvene Kemper complained that she felt intimidated into signing a pledge "by a group of men who gathered after one of the class periods." A friend of hers who did not pledge was thrown into the YMCA swimming pool.[46]

Some students might have felt hounded for subscriptions, but in some cases, the Memorial Association did not have an easy time collecting the money pledged. Holtz warned that "student checks are very hazardous to hold." They had to be cashed right away. Students, like faculty and staff, presumed that if they left the university, they were not obliged to continue paying.[47]

Some parents of university students refused to make good on their children's obligations for such "foolish things as stadiums." One complained that "you went after our Boys and Girls to get them to sign up for that old thing in the first place. . . . You know better than to go to the Parents for if you had there would not be any stadium." A man in Newman Grove wrote that his son did not have the money and the father refused to pay the debt.[48]

Holtz and the Alumni Association had good reason to press hard for payment. As he told the California alumni group, the Association "had virtually mortgaged our souls in order to keep faith with those who have already subscribed." Everything had been pledged to the contract.[49]

Holtz explained to the father of one delinquent student that the stadium drive had netted $350,000 in subscriptions and only $100,000 in cash. To start building, the Nebraska Memorial Association used the unpaid $350,000 and the mortgage on the future stadium as security for a $300,000 loan. Since many financial institutions were reluctant to lend on such ephemeral collateral, George Holmes of the First Trust Company of Lincoln, and a member of the Memorial Association, worked out a loan by persuading six associated trust companies to come aboard. Holmes arranged a five-year bond issue. The university's Athletic Association bound itself to pay $20,000 a year and the Board of Regents pledged "that they would secure additional funds if necessary."[50]

At that time some 750 students on campus were delinquent in paying their pledges and another payment on the bonds would have to be made in April 1924. The total of unpaid subscriptions had reached $30,000. "This is not an item to be sneezed at," Holtz told one complainer.[51]

Holtz and the Memorial Association tracked down procrastinating subscribers with a vengeance, sometimes years after the stadium was already in use. He said that the operation would be handled in a very businesslike manner, and he meant it. In 1928, five years after the drive began, the association sued twenty-five delinquent subscribers. The writer of an insufficient fund check was told, "If you don't pay, we will turn it over to our county attorney for prosecution."[52]

Holtz probably got tired of harassing people for money, and he admitted that getting the stadium built sometimes seemed like a "hopeless proposition. . . . Yet I am not willing to give up the ghost, and I think that in time we will collect a lot of this money that does not look at all promising now."[53]

The pledge of a Lincoln real estate firm was pursued through the courts. The Memorial Association sued Christian and Herman Company for the $250 and won in Municipal Court, "but get-

ting a judgement against these parties did not seem to have any effect on them." The next step was to try to impound Charles Herman's Cadillac coupe and George Christian's Packard. Christian escaped by claiming that the car belonged to his wife. Next the lawyers garnished Christian's bank account. The businessman and his attorney tried to argue that his money was exempt property, but apparently the Memorial Association was finally able to collect the pledge.[54]

Even the law firm that handled these matters for the Memorial Association had qualms about "various attorneys who have not paid their pledges. . . . We are dealing with these men day in and day out and probably will for a number of years to come and to gain their enmity would simply not be using our best judgement." Why not turn these bills over "to some young attorney who can sue these gentlemen without embarrassment?"[55]

Some pledges proved impossible to collect. The Gikas Brothers restaurant went into bankruptcy before the company had completely paid its subscription. Another Lincoln subscriber, Katsutaro Ito, owner of the YMCA Cafeteria, "is supposed to have gone back to Japan" and it was impossible to trace him.[56]

A few pledges were forgiven, but the circumstances were usually extreme. Dean C. B. Engberg, for example, forwarded a letter from the mother of one student with a delinquent subscription with his request that it be cancelled. Engberg knew the family. The father had recently died, the mother and son were both working, and the father, "by the way, has disinherited him [the son] in favor of the University of Nebraska."[57]

Most requests for cancellation of a subscription were denied. When the Enterprise Planing Mill of Lincoln suffered a fire and dropped its pledge, Holtz noted sarcastically, "that fire was as valuable to the Enterprise Mill as the postwar inflation in Germany was to the German government. . . . I cannot quite see wherein the Enterprise Planing Mill is justified in cancelling their obligation . . . they still exist as a corporation . . . we should collect it."[58]

After starting the drives in Nebraska, Holtz turned his attention to the alumni who had moved elsewhere and he assigned quotas to various alumni groups. Sioux City, Iowa, was to raise $940, alumni in Alabama, $30, and those in California, $5,700.[59]

In February 1923 Holtz hoped a trip back east would drum up enthusiasm and $12,000 to $15,000. During a meeting of the alumni group in Detroit the organizer planned to tune in a Nebraska football game on radio, "though we may have some difficulty because of local interference." Hearing the game would help put the listeners in a mood to donate.[60]

The Nebraska track team attended a meet in southern California with a double mission—to win and to talk to California alumni. "These boys must feel the most royal welcome," Holtz urged the California Cornhuskers. "They will tell you of the magnificent new stadium." Harry Minor, the campaign organizer in California, gave his drive a "Hollywood" touch by showing the film of the 1922 Nebraska-Notre Dame football game (a Nebraska victory) to all the alumni groups in the state and in Washington, Oregon, and Utah. He asked Holtz to send slides of campus buildings and "characters connected with the University such as Avery," to evoke memories and open wallets.[61]

By the fall of 1923 Holtz and the Alumni Association knew another round of fundraising would be necessary. He contacted all the county chairmen to see how a second drive would fare. In Tecumseh the feeling was not good. Responded J. B. Douglas, "Right now money matters are more stringent than they have been for some time," and public opinion there favored having Lincoln complete it, "since outside trade brought to Lincoln would be doubled and trebled . . . the credit accruing to Lincoln business men only."[62]

Walter Raecke of Central City suggested November would be the best time when "the most enthusiasm for anything of this kind can be aroused during the active football season." Homecoming and the dedication of the stadium would be the high points, but after the season "the enthusiasm immediately begins to subside."[63]

The October 1923 fundraising campaign on campus coincided with the dedication of the stadium and caught all the incoming freshmen, who were told they would get more use out of the stadium than any of the upperclassmen who had already pledged. On the evening of November 5, pairs of Innocents and Mortarboards, members of the upperclass honoraries, visited each fraternity, sorority, and dormitory to "secure pledges" from the freshmen. The next day all the freshmen were strongly encouraged to attend a rally in the Armory, where they would get another chance to pledge. To check attendance and catch any absentees, the organizers may have asked each freshman to sign a card and hand it in as he left. Subscribers got to wear green ribbons with their graduation year on it around campus. Junior and senior organizations planned to round up all the delinquent freshmen subscribers at the end of the week.[64]

Freshmen in the ROTC program could transfer their uniform deposits to the stadium fund instead of reclaiming them. "Your refund is payable May 23–28. You have not missed this 'ten spot' for the last nine months . . . why not put it to a good use and relieve yourself of an urgent obligation?" Holtz suggested having a student canvasser posted where the uniforms were turned in, a person with "some salesmanship ability would be best."[65]

Nebraska played its first game in the new stadium on October 13, 1923, against the University of Oklahoma, even though the east and west grandstands were not quite complete. Parsons Construction Company officials notified the Nebraska Memorial Association that it and not the company would be responsible for any injuries to the specta-

The east grandstand was still unfinished when Nebraska and Kansas played to a scoreless tie on October 20, 1923, the date the stadium was officially dedicated. NSHS-RG2758:102-31.

tors. The contractors also warned the association to have its architects check the structure "to determine any possible danger of falling timber, form-work, or debris, and . . . to determine what parts of the structure, at this time, have developed the strength necessary to avoid collapse." Guards should be posted on the ramps leading to the balconies to keep people out. Fortunately the game was played without any mishaps.[66]

Memorial Stadium was dedicated on October 20 at the homecoming game with the University of Kansas. Before the game began a parade of students and alumni gathered at Twelfth and P streets, wound through downtown Lincoln to Sixteenth Street, and marched back to the stadium. The financing and construction of Memorial Stadium had not been without risk, but the Alumni Association had kept its promise that the team would play there in 1923.[67]

The stadium cost $482,938.82. By eliminating some features the Memorial Association had been able to trim nearly $66,000 from the Parsons Construction Company bid of $548,849, bringing the total much closer to the group's original goal of $450,000. Memorial Stadium never included all the features that the first war memorial plans called for, such as the museum or friezes. Harold Holtz reported that the stadium would be finished "only so far as the money available allows." The oval ends and the colonnades would not be started until they could be paid for. With agriculture in the state already depressed when the Great Depression began, the necessary funds never materialized.[68]

The circular, precast concrete medallions of the official seals of the Missouri Valley Conference schools were completed around the exterior walls. The Alumni Association contacted Gutzon Borglum about making bronze memorial tablets to flank the east entrance, but they apparently were never finished or installed.[69]

In August 1927 First Trust turned the mortgages over to the Memorial Association, and Holtz was able to announce in 1928 that all contracted debts had been paid. Characteristically, he also stated, "Let no one gain the impression from the fact that the stadium is paid for that all unpaid obligations will be canceled."[70]

The Memorial Association finally closed its books in 1940. It was not until 1972, when an addition to the south grandstand was constructed, that the

oval stadium was completed. The Nebraska Memorial Association, the Alumni Association, and their supporters had taken a serious financial risk, but their efforts were rewarded. They gave the university and its students a usable stadium in 1923 that, with numerous later additions and improvements, continues to serve the university's nationally recognized football program.[71]

Notes

[1] Frederick C. Luebke, ed. *Harmony of the Arts: The Nebraska State Capitol* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 10; David Murphy, "Symbolism and Inscriptions: The Contributions of Hartley Burr Alexander" in ibid., 33, 47; Robert Knoll, *Prairie University* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press and the Alumni Association of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1995), 77.

[2] "College Athletics Must be Encouraged," *Daily Nebraskan*, Jan. 3, 1918 (hereafter cited as *DN*); "Athletics Big Help in Training Camp," ibid., Jan. 7, 1918; "Coach Stewart Has Message for Visitors," ibid., Mar. 8, 1918.

[3] "New Gymnasium," *DN*, Jan. 15, 1919; "Building Program Began in Earnest," ibid., Jan. 3, 1919; "Building Program is Well Handled," ibid., Jan. 9, 1919; "Ames Won't Play in Nebraska Gym," ibid., Jan. 19, 1919.

[4] Minutes, Mar 14 and 23, 1918; May 25, 1918, Alumni Association Papers, University Archives/Special Collections Department, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries (Hereafter cited as Alumni Association Papers). Unless stated otherwise, all collections cited are from the University Archives/Special Collections Department.

[5] Harold Holtz to John R. Webster, Apr. 20, 1923, Memorial Stadium Building Program, Alumni Association Papers; "N Club Suggest Rhodes Memorial," *DN*, Mar. 21, 1919; Claire Bowman to Oscar Bowman, Dec. 6, 1922, Oscar Bowman Papers, Alumni Collection Group; Editorial, *DN*, Mar. 25, 1919; "The Student Should Know about 'N' Club and Rhodes," ibid., Mar. 28, 1919.

[6] "Regents Discuss Campus Changes," *DN*, Mar. 5, 1919; "Regents in Favor of New Gymnasium, ibid., Mar. 13, 1919; Samuel Avery to Charles Hodgdon, Mar. 24, 1920, Samuel Avery Papers (hereafter cited as Avery Papers).

[7] "Colleges Honor War Dead," *DN*, Jan. 16, 1920; "Plans Discussed for Big Memorial, ibid., Jan. 29, 1920; "Memorial to be Lasting Tribute," ibid., Feb. 13, 1920.

[8] "Guy Reed to Manage War Memorial Drive," *DN*, Mar. 4, 1920.

[9] Booklet, "Nebraska War Memorial: Shall Nebraska Keep Her Promise?" Memorial Stadium Building Program, Alumni Association Papers; Avery to Hodgdon, Mar 16 and 19, 1920, Avery Papers.

[10] "Memorial Campaign Begins May 17," *DN*, May 3, 1920.

[11] Avery to Hodgdon, Apr. 27, May 3, 1920, Avery Papers.

[12] "Wear Your Old Clothes and Subscribe to the Gymnasium Fund," DN, May 7, 1920; "Your Bit for the Great Memorial," ibid., May 6, 1920; "Campaign Launched at Convocation Thursday," ibid., May 21, 1920.

[13] "Memorial Drive Plans Finished," *DN*, May 24, 1920; "Stage Set for Big Drive," *Nebraska State Journal*, May 23, 1920; "Nebraskans for Memorial Million Dollar Stadium Drive," ibid., May 30, 1920; "Report on Memorial Fund," ibid., June 10, 1920.

[14] R. H. Adams to Vincent Hascall, May 20, 1920; Woodruff Ball to Hascall, May 28, 1920; Dr. C. G. Barnes to Hascall, June 19, 1920, all Memorial Stadium Building Program, Alumni Association Papers.

[15] Bob Stout to Hascall, June 1, 1920; J. H. Doyle to Hascall, June 7, 1920; John Lawler to Hascall, June 12, 1920; W. Dayton to Hascall, May 29, 1920, all Memorial Stadium Building Program, Alumni Association Papers.

[16] J. M. Douglass, Holdrege, to Hascall, June 15, 1920; W. W. Dayton to Hascall, June 3, 1920; Hascall to Dayton, June 3, 1920, all Memorial Stadium Building Program, Alumni Association Papers.

[17] R. McLaran Sawyer, *Centennial History of the University of Nebraska*, vol. 2 (Lincoln: Centennial Press, 1973), 6; "Alumni Day June 3–4," *University Journal* (July 1921): 1; *Senate Journal of the Legislature of the State of Nebraska, Fortieth Session* (1921), 1565, 1845, 1968.

[18] James C. Olson and Ronald C. Naugle, *History of Nebraska*, 3d ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 305–6; Sawyer, *Centennial History*, 6; Avery to Deans of the Several Colleges, Feb. 9, 1922, Board of Regents Papers.

[19] Holtz to F. W. Judson, Oct. 22, 1921, Memorial Stadium Building Program, Alumni Association Papers; Report of Memorial Committee, May 10, 1921, Innocents Society Papers; Annual Report of the Secretary, Dec. 7, 1921, Alumni Association Papers; Knoll, *Prairie University*, 41.

[20] Sawyer, *Centennial History*, 22; Olson, *History of Nebraska*, 302; "Special Session of the Legislature and the University," *University Journal* (Jan. 1922): 13.

[21] Sawyer, *Centennial History*, 3–4; Olson, *History of Nebraska*, 302–3.

[22] Minutes, Apr. 7, 1922, Alumni Association Papers; "The Stadium Again," *University Journal* (Apr. 1922): 4; "The Stadium in Sight," ibid. (Sept. 1922): 2.

[23] Minutes, Mar. 24, 1923 and articles of incorporation, Mar. 9, 1923, Board of Regents Papers.

[24] "Annual Report of the Secretary," *University Journal* (June 1923): 165; *1924 Annual Report, Alumni Association, University of Nebraska*, 13.

[25] Charles B. Anderson to Holtz, Aug. 31, 1922; Robert Manley to Holtz, Sept. 23, 1922; John Latenser to Holtz, Oct. 23, 1922, Alumni Association Papers. Both Davis and Latenser attended the university for a few years. "Of Particular Interest," *University Journal* (Mar. 1923): 64.

[26] "Introducing your new Secretary," *University Journal* (Oct. 1921): 4.

[27] Minutes, executive committee, Dec. 31, 1921, Alumni Association Papers; "Report," *University Journal* (Apr. 1922): 1; "Annual Report of the Secretary," *University Journal* (June 1922): 14; Holtz, "Open Letter to Former Students," n.d., Alumni Association Papers.

[28] Booklet, "What to do Now," 11, 16; Holtz to Guy Thatcher, Oct. 6, 1922; Holtz to Effie Anderson, Mar. 12, 1925, all Alumni Association Papers.

[29] "Dodge Co. University Alumni to Stage Drive for Quota to Stadium Drive," Fremont *Evening Tribune*, Nov. 20, 1922.

[30] W. W. Wilson to Marcus Poteet, Nov. 23, 1922; W. A. Racely to Holtz, Memorial Stadium Building Program, Alumni Association Papers.

[31] Dr. Cousins to Holtz, Sept. 19, 1925; Crete Mills to Holtz, May 5, 1926, ibid.

[32] D. F. Morris to "Dear Sir," Nov. 24, 1922, note on "Bulletin No. 1 to County Chairmen," n.d.; Meredith Reneau to Holtz, Nov. 25, 1922; R. O. Canaday to Holtz, Dec. 21, 1922, ibid.

[33] W. A. Robertson to Holtz, Oct. 28, 1922; M. W. Dimery to Holtz, Nov. 21, 1922, ibid.

[34] August Eiche to Holtz, Oct. 28, 1922, ibid.; "Lincoln Over-Subscribes," *University Journal* (Dec. 1922): 12; "Some Large Stadium Pledges," ibid. (Feb. 1923): 42.

[35] Holtz to Avery, Apr. 4, 1922; Frank Judson to Holtz, Nov. 20, 1922; Holtz to Judson, Dec. 4, 1922, Apr. 3, 1923; Holtz to Robert Manley, Feb. 13, 1923; Holtz to Avery and Board of Regents, Mar. 24, 1923, Memorial Stadium Building Program, Alumni Association Papers.

[36] Charles Epperson, Jr. to Poteet, Nov. 5, 1922, ibid.

[37] "Buckingham gives $5,000," *University Journal* (Feb. 1923): 42; "Ulmanis—Builder of a Republic," ibid. (Sept. 1924): 253; Guy Reed to Holtz, Nov. 10, 1922; Frank Coatsworth to Holtz, Nov. 10, 1922, Memorial Stadium Building Program, Alumni Association Papers.

[38] "The Stadium Gets Pigs," *University Journal* (Nov. 1923): 253; "High Schools Contribute," ibid. (Jan. 1923): 17; Jas. O'Connell to Holtz, Oct. 30, 1923; Holtz to E. E. Pont, Nov. 29, 1922, Memorial

Stadium Building Program, Alumni Association Papers.

[39] Ernest Anderson to Holtz, Oct. 27, 1922; Philip J. Harrison to L. F. Seaton, Oct. 27, 1923; P. J. Schisslee to Holtz, Feb. 7, 1924, Memorial Stadium Building Program, Alumni Association Papers.

[40] Minutes, Sept. 17 and 22, 1922, Innocents Society Papers; Student Stadium Committee minutes, Oct. 5, 18, 25, 1923; Report of Committee on Stadium Groundbreaking, n.d., Memorial Stadium Building Program, Alumni Association Papers.

[41] Holtz to M. T. Reneau, Nov. 27, 1922; Instructions, n.d., Memorial Stadium Building Program, Alumni Association Papers; "Stadium in Sight," *University Journal* (Sept. 1922): 12; "Students Meet the Issue," ibid. (Nov. 1922): 15.

[42] "Award Stadium Contract," *University Journal* (May 1923): 124; "Stadium Payments Due," ibid. (Oct. 1923): 219; *We Will Build the Stadium in 1923, Salesman's Handbook*, n.p., n.d. [5], Memorial Stadium Building Program, Alumni Association Papers.

[43] Ibid.; *Third Annual Roundup, Annual Report*, Alumni Association, 1924, 14.

[44] "Our Stadium Starts," *University Journal* (May 1923): 120; "Lay Stadium Cornerstone," ibid. (June 1923): 162.

[45] Holtz to Mrs. W. W. Cameron, Mar. 31, 1924; Roy B. Ford to Lyle Holland, Oct. 19, 1928, Memorial Stadium Building Program, Alumni Association Papers; "The Stadium and the Students," *University Journal* (Dec. 1922): 5.

[46] Roy Armstrong to Nebraska Memorial Association, Oct. 18, 1922; Alvene Kemper to Holtz, Sept. 10, 1925, Memorial Stadium Building Program, Alumni Association Papers.

[47] Holtz to Chester Amy, Sept. 16, Oct. 17, 1924; "Third Payment Campaign," n.d., ibid.

[48] Mrs. Jones to Holtz, n.d.; C. E. Barrett to Holtz, Dec. 5, 1924, ibid.

[49] Holtz to Edwin J. Ohlsen, May 19, 1923, ibid.

[50] Holtz to J. W. Warrick, Meadow Grove, Jan. 28, 1924; George Holmes to Baxter Bond, Feb. 9, 1925; Holtz to Lloyd Boswell, Feb. 14, 1924, Memorial Stadium Building Program, Alumni Association Papers; Vote to protect stadium bonds, Mar. 24, 1923, Board of Regents Papers.

[51] Ray Striker to C. J. Rosenberry, Urbana, Ill., Feb. 8, 1924; Holtz to P. E. Beebe, Ames, Aug. 1, 1924, Memorial Stadium Building Program, Alumni Association Papers.

[52] Holmes, Chambers and Holland, Lincoln, to Herbert Baird, Oct. 16, 1928; Holmes Chambers and Holland to Reginald Bauder, Apr. 11, 1924, Memorial Stadium Building Program, Alumni Association Papers.

[53] Holtz to J. T. Bauman, Sept. 19, 1927, ibid.

[54] Holtz to Christian & Herman Co., Feb. 1, 1924; Holmes, Chambers and Holland to Holtz, Nov. 2, 1927, Feb. 16, 1928, ibid.

[55] Lyle Holland to Holtz, Nov. 21, 1928, ibid.

[56] Note to Holtz, n.d., application for cancellation, Nov. 28, 1925, ibid.

[57] Mrs. Caroline Ayer to C. B. Engberg with note to Holtz from Engberg, Jan. 15, 1924, ibid.

[58] Holtz to Holland, Dec. 15, 1927, ibid.

[59] Holtz to H. R. Harley, Dec. 8, 1922, ibid.; "Stadium in Sight," *University Journal* (Sept. 1922): 12.

[60] Holtz to John Latenser, Feb. 19, 1923; Ernest Barnhart to Holtz, Feb. 8, 1923; Memorial Stadium Building Program, Alumni Association Papers.

[61] Holtz to "California Cornhuskers," Mar. 1923; Harry Minor to Holtz, May 3, 1923, ibid.

[62] J. B. Douglas to Holtz, Sept. 27, 1923; ibid.

[63] Walter Raecke to Holtz, Sept. 29, 1923, ibid.

[64] Minutes of Student Stadium Committee, Oct. 5 and 18, 1923, ibid.

[65] "Dear Cadet," n.d., ibid.

[66] Earl Hawkins to Stadium Building Committee, Oct. 12, 1923, ibid.

[67] "You Dedicate Your Stadium," *University Journal* (Oct. 1923): 218.

[68] President's Report, May 1932, Alumni Association Papers; "Stadium Payments Due," *University Journal* (Oct. 1923): 219.

[69] "First Units of the Stadium are Complete," *Nebraska Alumnus* (Nov. 1926): 419; "Report of the Secretary," ibid. (June 1925): 243.

[70] "Secretary's Report," ibid. (June 1928): 264; O. F. Schlaebitz to Holtz, Aug. 16, 1927, Memorial Stadium Building Program, Alumni Association Papers.

[71] "Memorial Association—Final Act," *Nebraska Alumnus* (Apr. 1940): 11; "A Look at the History of Memorial Stadium," *Lincoln Journal and Star*, Aug. 26, 1988.