

Alumni Lend Aid

ONE of the purposes of the University Alumni association has always been "to assist alma mater at times when she is unable to do things for herself."

No better example of how University alumni—banded together in the interest of the University—have been able to serve their school has been in evidence than the recent action to assist in the purchase of forty-one acres of land adjoining the campus.

Although the action was not taken in the name of the Alumni association, as a whole, it was the individual members of the association and several members of the faculty who performed an invaluable service in taking an option on this land.

A situation last summer prevented the University from buying the land outright. Looking into the future when larger enrolments and an increase in the physical equipment will make more land necessary, the board of regents and President W. B. Bizzell approved the purchase of forty-one acres just east of the east stadium wing. The tract extends east from the stadium

wing to the railroad tracks and is bounded on the north by Brookes street—the street on which the library faces—and on the south by Lindsey street—the street that bounds Owen field on the south.

They realized that some day—perhaps ten or even one hundred years from now—more land will be needed. They looked at the map of Norman and of the campus. Expansion to the north would be impossible on account of the business district and high land values. To the west was a residential district, large homes and expensive land. To the south was the R. O. T. C. drill and polo field and expansion farther south would make buildings on the north oval too far from anything south of Lindsey street. To the east of the stadium was the only vacant land that could be had reasonably.

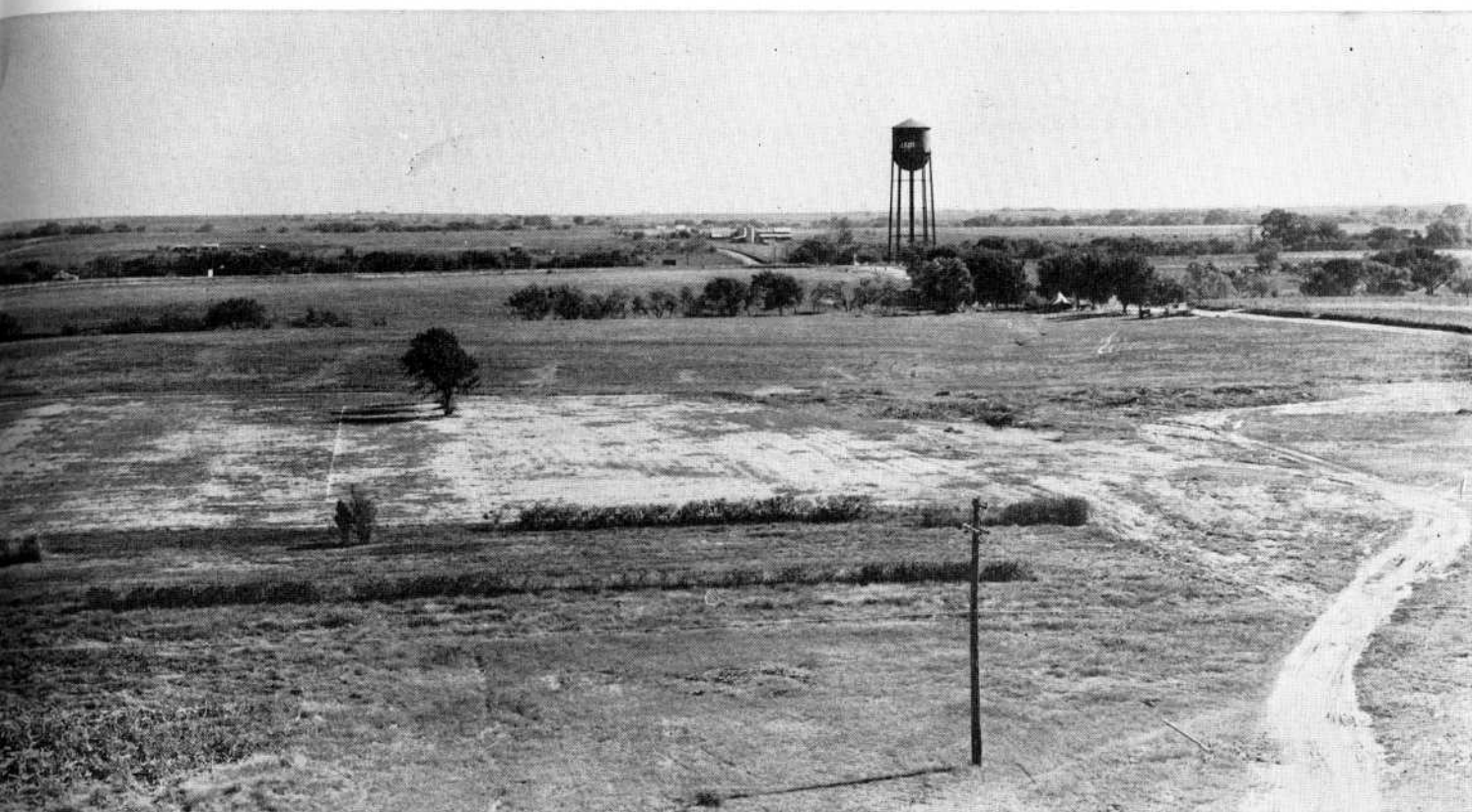
Enough money to purchase the land was available from appropriations, so the board of regents asked for a ruling from Attorney General J. Berry King as to the legality of a land purchase with this surplus fund. After a study of appropriation

regulations, Attorney General King ruled that the purchase could not be made with this fund—that the legislature would have to appropriate funds for the acquisition of the land by direct appropriation.

The owners of the land were ready to sell at a figure considered reasonable by the regents. Certainly, they felt, the land would never be any cheaper and undoubtedly would increase in value as the University grew and Norman's residential districts expanded. But the tract could not be purchased with the University's surplus fund.

It was during late summer that this group of alumni and faculty members agreed to buy the land and hold it without profit until such time as appropriations would be available to buy the tract for the University. The purchase price was \$16,500.

The ten men were Lewis R. Morris, '15as, '15M.A., '17law, president of the University of Oklahoma association and Oklahoma county attorney; Errett R. Newby, '06fa, '07as, member of the alumni executive board; Emil R. Kraettli, '18ex, secretary of the University; Frank S. Cleckler, '21as, secretary-treasurer of the association; Neil R. Johnson, '15as, '17law, former president of the association and Norman rancher-stockman; Ben G. Owen, director of intramural athletics; Dr. S. W. Reaves, dean of the college of arts and sciences; Walter W. Kraft, superintendent of Uni-



A bird's eye view of the forty-one acre tract of land that has been purchased and is being held by ten alumni and faculty members of the University is shown here. The picture was taken from the top of the east stadium wing. The tract extends east to the railroad tracks and north and south to the roads on the border of the picture. Playing fields already in use may be seen in the foreground.

versity utilities; Dr. J. H. Felgar, dean of the college of engineering; and the late S. K. McCall, owner of the McCalls men store in Norman and a loyal friend of the University for the last third of a century.

This group offered to assist the University purely from the view-point of "aiding alma mater when she was unable to assist herself."

The agreement prevented any profit from being made from the transaction. Should the appropriation not be available for the University's expansion of its land holdings, the University will neither gain nor lose anything.

The forty-one acre tract, however, is certain to be of increased value during the next few years and under the terms of the purchase made by the alumni and faculty group is as reasonable as it will ever be.

Working under the belief that the land will be bought eventually by the University, beautification and utilization of the acres already has been started under the direction of Ben G. Owen, director of intramural athletics. The brush has been cleared from the fields and several touch football and soft ball diamonds have been laid out.

Under the direction of Howard Jensen, University landscape gardener, and the University botany department, an experimental Oklahoma garden will be planted on the land. Here native Oklahoma plants

and flowers will be grown, and experiments will be performed in growing other types of vegetation in typical Oklahoma soil.

The forty-one acres is expected to take on the appearance of a park within the next year as every effort is made to utilize the idle ground.

The tract includes all of the land bounded by the three streets described and the railroad tracks except for a small strip in the northwest corner on which there are a half dozen houses.

President Bizzell at the alumni association luncheon in the Oklahoma Union during the last commencement-time reunion gave an indication of the appearance of the University of Oklahoma campus sometime in the future.

He hopes that someday the new tract will house the power plant and the engineering college. The technical schools would be grouped together with their experimental laboratories and fields in this forty-one acres.

The north campus, which now houses the entire University, would be given over to the fine arts, liberal arts, business college, law school, journalism school and social sciences. Grouped in this fashion, the buildings would be conveniently located for the various schools and colleges.

President Bizzell's picture of the future University of Oklahoma campus was not one that he believes will be realized in the immediate future. It was one it will take decades to see fulfilled. But this planning for the future—both on his part and the part of the board of regents—is a step generally believed to be far-sighted and certainly one that someday will be considered a wise move.

For, it is believed, the University will certainly expand during the coming decades and as colleges and universities play an ever increasing part in the lives of the citizens of Oklahoma, this move made by the board of regents and assisted so generously by alumni and faculty members will be looked back upon as a wise one.