



No Pension for Old Gym

By Frances Hunt

Long Ago Scheduled for Discard, This Ancient Frame Structure Has To Be Kept in Use for Overflowing Classes

TWO years ago the University said goodbye to that old grey frame building that Sooners of twenty-five and thirty years ago called the Gym.

Its years of usefulness were finished. Its bones ached; its joints creaked. Everyone agreed it could be asked to serve no longer, and that it would have to be torn down, although there was a suggestion that it be left "just temporarily" for use as a practice hall for the band boys.

Student reporters wrote stories recalling the history of the frame structure which was erected about 1903 or 1904 and had a period of early glory as the place where such famed basketball players as Reeds, McDermott, Whisenant and the Bell brothers played. Crowds as large as three or four hundred persons used to line the walls and crowd the one balcony. At the other end of the gym the goal was placed against the wall. Sooner players developed skill in putting one foot against the wall to gain height in shooting baskets. These days, of course, ended with the coming of the Armory.

Walter Kraft, the utilities department head, said he was going to move the old gym out by the baseball bleachers, where the band could rehearse without disturbing the history and English classes in Buchanan Hall. After several years as a zoology laboratory, the old gym would hear no more class bells and professors' voices.

The new Biological Sciences building wasn't quite complete, however, when school started in the fall of 1936. Moving day was delayed several times. The bandmen wanted to practice, so they moved in. And so started another era, probably the most astonishing in the history of the old gym.

Before anyone quite realized it, the formal name of the building had been changed again in the University catalog—from "Zoology Laboratory" to "Band Practice Building."

Moving day never did arrive, and now its date remains extremely vague. For the old gym has had to stay in the harness whether it felt like it or not.

Although many students didn't know it, the building served another purpose during its year as the Band Practice Building. It housed the aquarium for the orphan fish of the zoology department.

This unusual combination lasted only one year, however. Last year the building was renamed "Elementary-School Building" and housed grades one to six of the University's practice school. A new generation of Sooners, grandchildren of those who thrilled at Oklahoma basketball triumphs in the early 1900's, walked its corridors. The band kept one room for instruments and could practice after 4 o'clock. The northeast room, down a narrow hall from the main entrance, was given over to the NYA office.

This year the University's staff of workers gave the old structure another shot in the arm and practically gave up hope of doing without it. Officials christened it again—twice. Formally, they named it "Liberal Arts Annex." Among themselves, they decided to call it "Kraettli Hall" in honor of E. R. Kraettli, veteran secretary of the University and most persistent practical joker on the campus.

"Kraettli Hall" now has an imposing list of occupants. Despite its ancient walls, its squeaking stairs, uneven floors, long dark hallways and scarcity of windows, it houses the department of speech, the speech clinic, two history professors, the WPA museum service project and a map-mounting project of the geology department. It has twelve rooms listed on its directory, including one large classroom downstairs and three small ones upstairs.

About one thousand more students are attending classes on the O. U. campus than there were two years ago, and the classes have to meet somewhere. It's easy to explain why the old gym had to be drafted back into service.

The speech department had to move out of the Union because the dean of men's office and the counselor of women's office were moved into the third floor of the Union last summer, and more space was required for the Union's expanding services. Dean Findlay had vacated space in the Ad building to allow the Faculty Exchange to be moved because the comptroller's office needed more space. Miss Stephenson moved from the first floor of the Women's building, which always has been used for the dean's office and a reception room, in order to provide more space for women's physical education.

NOW Miss Ima James' department has all of the Women's building for its classes. Miss James had been holding some classes in the long frame building between the Women's building and the Infirmary—the structure once known as "Park Row." This now is being used by the grade school children who were transferred from the old gym. The NYA office was transferred to Dean Findlay's office in the Union. The band now practices in the Armory. The aquarium was crowded out of the dingy roof on the southeast corner of second floor of the old gym, although the Biological Sciences building had no place for it. A skylight put in to provide sunlight for the fish now makes the working day more cheerful for the WPA museum staff quartered there.

The skylight is a symbol of the undignified treatment the old gym has been forced to accept. Instead of being treated with the respect due a historic campus structure, the gym has been "fixed up" every year as cheaply as possible. It's still white on the outside, but its lean-to's and its south entrance have been torn away. It has had a second floor added, then

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John C. Gallivan, '38eng, is employed at technical oil field services by the Lane-Wells Company. He resides in Caspar, Wyoming.

Lucille Davis Plog, '38ed, is teaching public school music in the Verden schools.

Chester C. McPheeters, '38ex, has been appointed area executive for the Boy Scouts of America. He will be stationed in the area around Mangum, Altus and Hobart in southwestern Oklahoma.

Ophard L. Baker, '38pharm, is with the Sturgeon Drug Company in Oilton.

Reuben Gell, '38ex, is in school this year at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge.

Ethelene Kirk, '38h.ec, is a student dietitian at Miami Valley Hospital in Dayton, Ohio.

Helen Hadley, '38, former secretary to T. M. Beaird, O. U. Alumni secretary, resigned from her position at the University early in October to take a position with a shorthand reporting firm in New York City.

Janet Fleming Kothe, '38ma, is an instructor in the Tulsa schools.

Mary Louise McElwee, '38, is head of the physical education department for women at Hendrix College, Conway, Arkansas.

Hazel Bradstreet, '38, is teaching in the normal school at Kearney, Nebraska.

Lurline Kraft, '38, is teaching in the Putnam Heights School at Oklahoma City.

Dave Johnson, '38ma, is now news editor of the *Vinita Daily Journal*. He is also correspondent for the *Daily Oklahoman* and *Oklahoma City Times*, *Kansas City Journal* and *Kansas City Star*.

Medford Cashion, Jr., '38eng, has been appointed an aviation cadet for flight training at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida. He ranked second in his class in a 30-day preliminary school.

After covering an assignment for the *Daily Oklahoman* by air, Betty Baughman, '38journ, got the urge to learn to pilot a plane. She reported to Wiley Post Airport for lessons, and recently was reported ready to take tests for a pilot's license.

Dick Askew, '38bus, has received an appointment to the air corps training center at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

Maynard Williams, '38law, has been appointed police judge of Norman.

Orville E. Morrow, '38eng, is chemical engineer with the Pacific Gas and Electric Company in San Francisco, California.

Mrs. Louis Stuart (Ruth Potts, '38ph.ed), lives now in Wink, Texas.

Caroline Elder, '38fa, is teaching public school music in Oklahoma City.

McINTIRE-RIVERS: Miss Iris McIntire, '38ed, and John A. Rivers were married August 11. They reside in Geary.

SNIPES-SPALSBURY: Miss Helen Snipes and William S. Spalsbury, '38eng, were married July 23. They reside in Oklahoma City.

MOODY-DAVIS: Miss Gladys Moody, '38ed, and John Ronald Davis, of Lime Springs, Iowa, were married October 8 in Norman. She is commercial teacher in the high school at Crawford, Oklahoma.

SELMAN-McCRACKEN: Miss Mary Jane Selman, '38ex, and Robert R. McCracken, '38law, were married September 24 in Chandler. She was a member of Pi Beta Phi sorority, and he was a member of Beta Theta Pi fraternity. They live in Oklahoma City.

WYMAN-CRADDOCK: Miss Ruth Wyman and James L. Craddock, '38ex, were married in October. He was a member of Alpha Sigma Phi fraternity at the University. They live in Tulsa.

BLOCH-PACK: Miss Jean Bloch, '38, of Tulsa, and Sam Pack, '38, of Norman, were married October 1 in Washington, D. C., where Mr. Pack is on the staff of the Works Progress Administration.

HOSEA-SIMMS: Miss Kathryn Hosea, '38ex, and James Brewer Simms, '38law, were married in October. They live in Tulsa. Mrs. Simms

was a member of Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority and Mr. Simms was a member of Sigma Chi.

DAVIS-PALMER: Miss Marie Davis and Lucien William Palmer, '38ex, were married October 2 in Lawton. She attended Central State Teachers College and Washington University. They live at Union Valley, where he is superintendent of schools.

LAING-LEMMONS: Miss Liberty Faye Laing and Norman Dale Lemmons, '38pharm, were married this Autumn. They live in Abilene, Texas, where he is connected with a drug store.

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Maurice Norcross, Watonga, senior in the school of law, was killed in an automobile accident east of Geary October 1. He was riding on the fender of a car which crashed into another automobile.

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torn out, then rebuilt. Its partitions have been moved about many times. It has depressing gray paint on some walls, while others are of a dark cream-colored hue. Some of the foundation bricks are tumbling. One floor-board in Carl Ritzman's speech clinic (which he also uses for an office and a classroom) is falling out. Many walls are of thin beaverboard, and when a class comes down the stairs the tread of feet sounds like a parade of elephants.

The Union Building with its commanding tower, its beautiful new pine room and lounges, cuts off light from the north, but luckily also protects "Kraettli Hall" from the cold north winds. Buchanan Hall on the south unfortunately cuts off ventilation in the summer.

Actually, there is no more danger of fire in the old building than in the usual frame residence, because it has steam heat and smoking is not allowed. However, it is a potentially serious fire hazard for the Union. In case fire should break out, the smoke would do irreparable damage to the white stonework of the Union as the two structures are only a few feet apart.

The old gym is distinctly a blot on the beauty of the campus as it is crowded so closely against the south end of the Union, and obviously its early removal was expected when the Union was built ten years ago.

Retirement of the old gym any time soon is now out of the question. Even though it looks like a barn and in cold figures couldn't be valued at more than \$1,500 for its lumber, it has to be kept in service. For it's the only place available on the campus to house the speech department of the University—a rapidly growing and important department with a faculty of six persons, and the speech clinic which is doing valuable pioneer work in the correction of speech defects for Oklahomans.

O. U. hasn't yet had to pitch a tent on the campus to hold classes in, but it is actually only one step removed from that. A good strong tent might compare well with the old gym, at that!

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