

Temporary Student Union (1948-1958)

Longtime NSTC Professor Lula E. Wirt died on March 3, 1941, and in her will she included a bequest of \$1,000 to be used toward the construction of a student union building. A fund-raising campaign was begun to build a "Memorial Student Union," a name which was chosen in February 1943 in order to honor former students who gave their lives for their country. As the war ended in 1945, plans for a union were publicized, and the "Buck-A-Month" campaign was organized and supported by Kearney businessmen in order to raise the \$75,000 needed to get the project underway. It was estimated that \$125,000 would be needed in all. Unfortunately, the campaign did not raise the necessary money, and was discontinued in 1947.

In fall 1947, two buildings which had been used at area Army Air Fields became available through the War Surplus Properties Committee. The College acquired a 132' by 22' building which had been used as an officers' club at the Army Air Field at Scribner, Nebraska, and a smaller 25' by 60' building which had been used as a small warehouse at the Army Air Field in Sioux City, Iowa.

These buildings were disassembled and the material reassembled into a single L-shaped building north of A. O. Thomas Hall, where the Calvin T. Ryan Library now (2009) stands. The longer building was oriented north-south, and included a dance floor/ballroom. The smaller ell housed a snack bar, a game room, the offices of the Blue and Gold yearbook, and the offices of The Antelope student newspaper. The entire structure included 5,000 square feet of floor space.

The material from the disassembled buildings arrived on campus in late November, 1947, and construction was completed on April 16, 1948. Interior painting and finishing was accomplished by Head Custodian George Arnold and a staff of three students, and the building was ready for use by the beginning of the 1948 summer session. Total cost to the College for the building was \$15,000. Dorothy Holcomb was the first director.

Air conditioning was installed in July, 1953, and a television set in February, 1954.

The building was last used during the 1958 summer session, and was dismantled in October and November 1958 by the successful bidder, Shield Awning Company of Kearney, who planned to use the material in the construction of a warehouse.



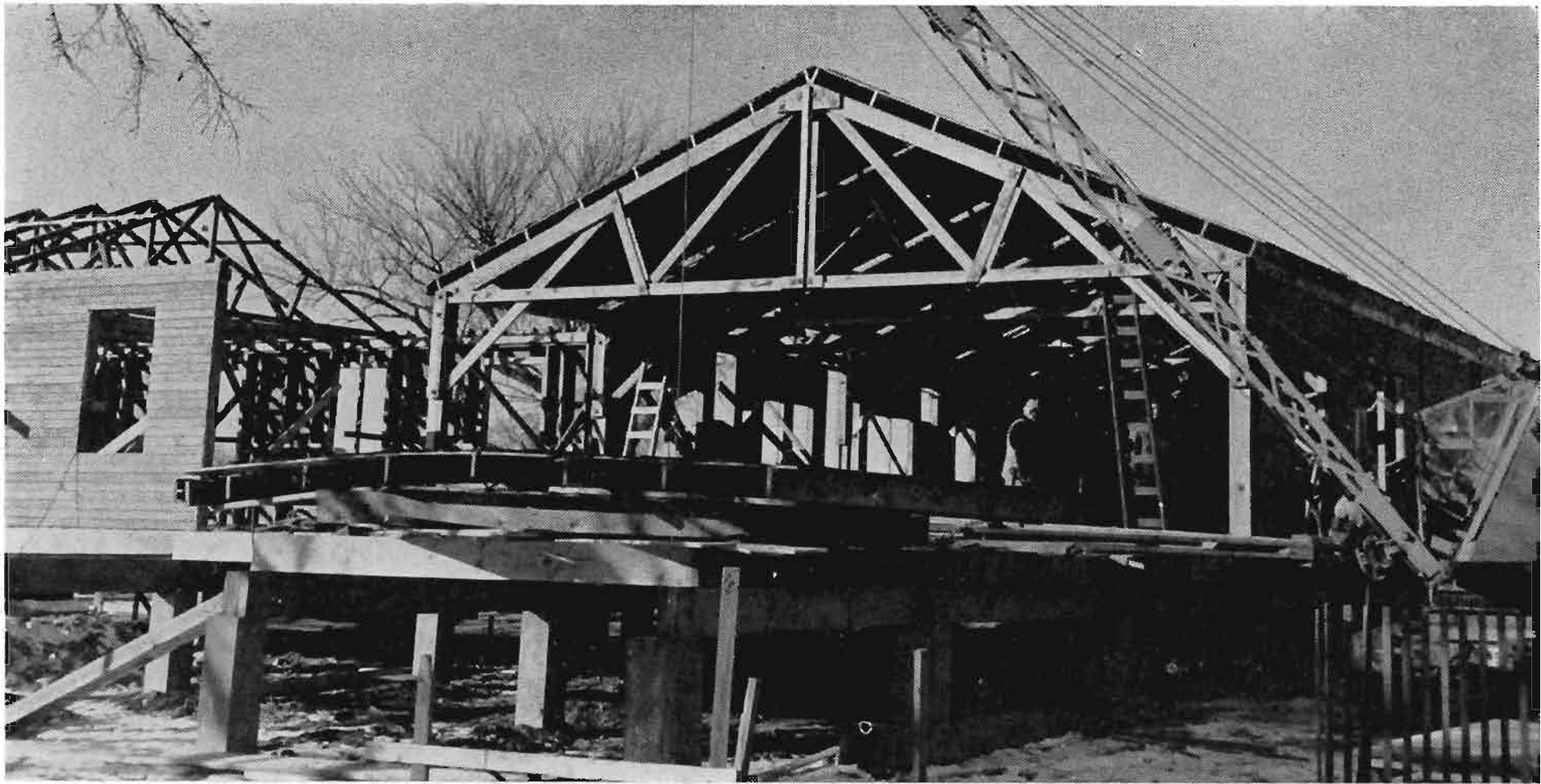
Snack Bar at Temporary Student Union, 1956



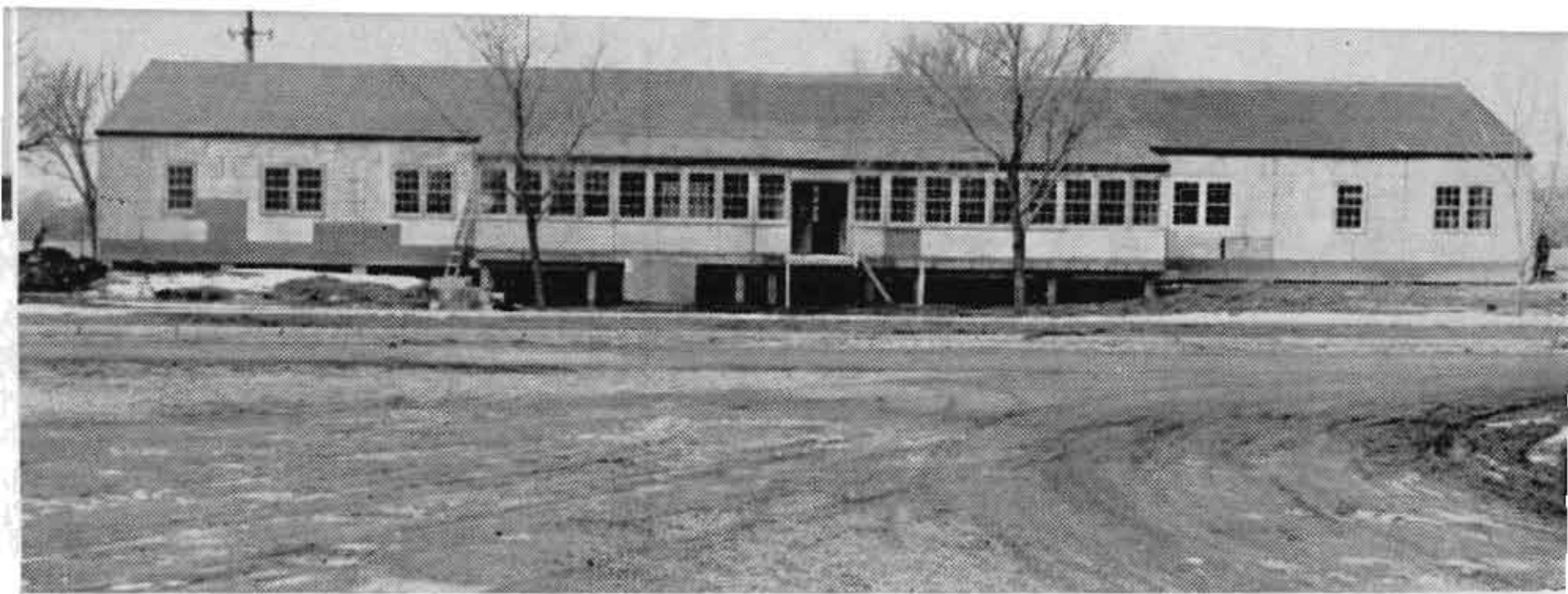
Removal of Temporary Student Union, 1958



**Dismantling of Temporary Student Union, 1958
View Looks to the Southwest**



Temporary Student Union Under Construction, 1948



**Temporary Student Union
Under Construction, 1948**



**Temporary Student Union, 1949. View Looks to the Northwest.
Men's Hall Visible at Far Right**



Snack Bar in Temporary Student Union, 1949



Snack Bar in Temporary Student Union, 1949



Game Room in Temporary Student Union, 1950



Temporary Student Union, 1950
Director Dorothy Holcomb on the Right



Temporary Student Union, Dance, 1950's