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Short History of Lewis Field Stadium

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Feb. 7, 1991

Larry.....

INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

As per your request, here is history of Lewis Field Stadium. There is nowhere on campus where a factual, complete record of that history can be found. I gathered this information from the archives in the library, yearbooks, history books, Katherine Rogers' History of the Lewis Field Pioneers, and other publications.

Enclosed is some interesting information from football program back in '37.

Larry, if you need more, let me know. It will take some time and we will really have to go in-depth into the archives.

Sincerely,


bob lowen

HISTORY OF LEWIS FIELD STADIUM.....bl '91

Construction on Lewis Field Stadium began in November, 1935 on the former Golden Belt Fairgrounds south of the campus proper. However, the football field was laid out as early as 1934.

In August, 1935, Fort Hays Kansas State College President Clarence E. Rarick championed the need for work for potential students and the need for a new football field and track facility. He went to state and federal officials and asked for funds to begin construction on the stadium.

In early September, 1935, the state of Kansas approved a \$65,950.90 request for a proposed \$91,000 football stadium project for Fort Hays Kansas State College.

Before the stadium was built, football games and track meets were held at Lewis Field which was located on the south side of the campus quadrangular where Forsyth Library now sits.

U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt approved the state-approved request for \$90,526 for a combination football stadium and recreation center; the Works Progress Administration (WPA) would provide \$65,971.12, with Fort Hays raising \$25,000.

About 200 FHKSC students were given stadium construction jobs under the youths' WPA blanket project, the only such project of this nature established by the WPA in the Fifth Congressional District.

The east side of the stadium was completed ~~in~~ in 1937. During its construction, seating was provided on the west side in the form of bleachers from the Golden Belt Fairgrounds. In the original

planning, seating for 20,000 people was planned. However, in the end, the seating capacity was reduced to 6,750.

A running track was added around the football field and a wall of limestone was built completely around the stadium. An enclosed press box was built. A unique aspect to the east stadium was that it housed 48 men in living quarters under the stadium.

Improvements to come later in and near the stadium included the addition of rest rooms and storage space for athletic equipment, ticket stands, fences, sidewalks, a clock and flagpole, drains and seeded areas.

Remodeling of the stadium and its facilities has taken place several times during the more than 50 years of its existence.

The first football game played at Lewis Field Stadium, occurred during the fall of 1935.