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The Memorial Union, University of Maine

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THE MEMORIAL UNION

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE
FIRST CONSIDERED IN 1922

Consideration was first given to the possibility of a Union Building at the University in 1922. In fact, the General Alumni Association was a charter member of the national Association of College Unions. It was not until 1946 that the Alumni Association decided that the time had come to raise $900,000 for a Union Building as a memorial to the 181 men who gave their lives, and as a tribute to all University of Maine men and women who served, in World War II.

On March 30, 1947, the alumni general campaign was formally opened. Prior to that date there had
been a conspicuously successful student campaign, and the Special Gifts Committee had made much progress towards its goal. Following is a summary of the subscriptions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP</th>
<th>NUMBER</th>
<th>AMOUNT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alumni</td>
<td>5953</td>
<td>$537,857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>6035</td>
<td>183,801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty (non-alumni)</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>10,204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>104,110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>12,332</strong></td>
<td><strong>$835,972</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to these subscriptions, the Trustees of the University allocated to the Memorial Union unrestricted bequests and accrued income amounting to $57,000 and appropriated $15,000 towards architects' fees and preliminary construction expenses.

**STUDENTS, FACULTY AND ALUMNI MAKE PLANS**

Long before the campaign opened, two committees had been at work, studying the facilities which the Union Building should provide. The initial recommendations were made by a Faculty-Student Committee appointed by President Hauck. An Alumni Committee on Building Requirements reviewed the recommendations of the Faculty-Student Committee, and together with that committee worked with the Architects, Cram and Ferguson of Boston, in developing floor plans which it was believed would be within the amount of money available for construction purposes. Hundreds of hours were devoted to this study. Naturally since the building was to be presented to the University, the plans were submitted to and approved by the Trustees of the University.

Three major points were foremost in planning; first, efficient operation and control, second, flexibility
of use, and third, minimum maintenance and operating costs of both the building and equipment.

Nine companies submitted bids which were opened on July 10, 1951. A few days later a contract was awarded to Consolidated Constructors of Portland in the amount of $665,871. The contract did not include the installation of the electrical, water, steam and sewer lines, nor the grading, landscaping and sidewalks. The total cost of work to date is about $760,000, exclusive of equipment and furnishings for the building. These were provided by the University through an appropriation of $26,000 and income of about $12,000 from the student Union Building fees.

During the many months of fund raising and planning, construction costs increased substantially. This meant that the money on hand and reasonably in prospect was not sufficient to complete the entire building. Alternate bids were therefore requested, so that, if necessary, it would be possible to contract for work which could be done to the best advantage and provide the facilities most needed.

Representatives of the General Alumni Association, the Union Building Fund Committee and the University Trustees, decided to build the entire exterior of the Union and to finish the first floor and the snack bar-cafeteria and service rooms on the ground floor.

**Groundbreaking**

Formal groundbreaking ceremonies were held on Alumni Day, June 17, 1950. The contractor broke ground on July 24, 1951, and the cornerstone was placed on November 10, 1951.

Looking forward to the opening of the Union, the General Student Senate took an important action on May 6, 1952, recommending to the University Board of Trustees that there be a Union fee of $5.00 per
semester, beginning with the Fall Semester of 1952. The recommendation stipulated that the first semester’s income from the fee would be used toward the purchase of equipment and thereafter the income would be used for the operation of the Union.

Nelson B. Jones began his duties as Director of the Memorial Union on March 1, 1953. Director of the Union at Brown University for about 25 years, and a past president of the national association, he brought much-needed experience to help get our Union off to a good start.

May 17, 1953, was the opening day. Thousands of students, faculty, alumni and friends inspected the Memorial Union which their gifts had made possible. The enthusiasm of the visitors was most gratifying.

This is an opportune time to state that the Union Building Fund Committee feels it was most fortunate in securing Mrs. Helen Taylor of Philadelphia as color consultant for decorating and to assist in the selection of equipment. Her invaluable services were made available to the committee without charge. Through her choice of colors, styling and furnishing, the rooms were delightfully pleasing and attractive.

On May 18, 1953, the Memorial Union was opened for regular use. The facilities which were available then, as now, are the Memorial Room, three lounges, a music room, seven meeting rooms, offices for the Union and the Student Religious Association, a sales-service desk in the main lobby, all on the first floor, and the snack bar-cafeteria, named “The Bears’ Den” by popular vote, on the ground floor.

Other than the Memorial Room, it was understood from the outset that flexibility of use would be the basic principle on which the Union would be operated. Thus, the same room may be used at different times for a meeting, conference, display, a lecture, a concert, a reception, or one of many other possible purposes, such as the University family Christmas party shown in the picture on this page.
THE UNION AS AN ORGANIZATION

The building is important and impressive, but its great contribution is in providing students the opportunities to develop wholesome educational, recreational, and cultural programs on a campus-wide basis. President Hauck, in the dedication address, very aptly stated the purpose of the Union in these words: "To broaden and deepen friendships between student and student and between student and faculty, and to enhance the social and cultural life of the University."

Under the direction of an experienced staff, the student committees are constantly planning events. There are eight committees, on which nearly one hundred students are serving. The completion of the Memorial Union will give many more students an opportunity to be active in the program.

These objectives are accomplished through two boards. An Activities Board of Students, composed of the chairmen of the committees, meets weekly to make program plans. The second group, known as the Governing Board, is composed of Administration, Faculty, Alumni and Student members. All matters of general policy and finance are acted upon
by this Board which meets monthly during the school year.

Thus the Memorial Union in the short space of less than one year is proving itself to be of great value to the University. As stated previously, approximately 2000 students and faculty make use of it each weekday. Often there are not sufficient meeting rooms to fill the need, a problem which will be overcome when the second floor of the building is finished.

For Commencement and Alumni Homecoming, the Memorial Union has already demonstrated that at long last we have facilities which make it possible to arrange alumni events far more satisfactorily than ever before.

Now that the Memorial Union is built, where do we stand financially? The summary of income and expenses which follows does not include the funds which the University made available for this purpose. Of the $835,972 in pledges, $737,867 or 88 per cent has been paid. In addition, the fund has received $49,423 in interest on savings accounts, making a grand total of $787,290. The campaign expenses were $73,806 which is 8.8 per cent of the amount subscribed. This is an unusually low percentage cost, especially for a national campaign such as ours. Collections costs have been $18,137 or 2.4 per cent of the amount collected. This, too, is a relatively low figure and is a tribute to the loyalty and promptness with which subscribers generally have met their payments as they became due.

The Fund has expended $690,536 on planning and building construction costs. This leaves about $4,800 cash on hand to meet $10,495 in bills payable, so $5,695 is required to pay off all indebtedness.

It is our desire and intention to do everything possible to pay off that $5,695 by next Alumni Day in June. To do that we earnestly request the cooperation of each person who still has a balance due on his or her subscription.
The Trustees, faculty and students of the University are very much interested in the possibility of finishing at least the billiard and table tennis game room this summer. It would be gratifying, too, if money is available to install the bowling alleys. Such work, if undertaken, will have to be paid for from payments on pledges and from new gifts.

It is not too soon to consider how and when we are to secure the funds needed to complete the kitchen and dining room on the ground floor, and the entire second floor of the Union. We should also think in terms of adding a wing on the rear of the building which would provide an auditorium on the first floor, with a balcony at the second floor level, as well as a spacious hall on the ground floor. An auditorium is one of the University's most urgent needs, and will greatly enhance the usefulness of the Union.

Of course I do not know, but I am sure that every person who has contributed to the Memorial Union can take justifiable pride in the fine building which is serving so many so well. To a larger degree than ever before, alumni, faculty, students and friends have shared in the progress of our University.

It has been a genuine pleasure to have had a part in helping to make this Memorial possible. On behalf of the Union Building Fund Committee members, I am happy to thank again all who worked so loyally and conscientiously in the campaign, and to express grateful appreciation to all whose gifts have helped to make possible this great achievement.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

RAYMOND H. FOGLER
Chairman, Union Building Fund Committee
"Truly significant is a man who acts for a cause when the spirit is sure, when duty and destiny are one! In the eternal quest for proof of meaning and purpose in life, a bright light shines at the time and place where a man dies in the faith in which he lived, for the cause which his traditions and training made a part of his character. Here are the brighter beacons in the aspiration of the human spirit, where vision and action meet and merge in a force of example to inspire the surviving companies in the march toward their own fulfilment.

"These are such men. The reward they earned is ours in trust, to administer in peace and goodwill with a zeal like theirs in arms, in a manner worthy of their highest hopes."

— Edward E. Chase '13

(Taken from the Book of Memory in the Memorial Room of the Memorial Union)
"The Memorial Room is dedicated to the University of Maine men who left a ‘record of courage and sacrifice, of love, and of devotion to duty that transcends all thought of safety, or of gain or of selfish ambition.’

"May the students, faculty and alumni of the University use this room in ways and for purposes that honor those for whom the Memorial Union was dedicated."

—Arthur A. Hauck