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A Celebration 100 Years in the Making: The Modernization of Davis Wade Stadium at Scott Field from 1914 to 2014

by Adam G. Pfleegor
and
Chad S. Seifried

“I don’t think you can appreciate [the modern Davis Wade Stadium] unless you’ve seen what it has been in the past”
– Bobby Tomlinson, Mississippi State University Associate Athletic Director of Facility Management and Construction¹

Football games at Mississippi State University’s (formerly Mississippi A&M) Davis Wade Stadium at Scott Field have existed as a social anchor for Bulldog fans and northeast Mississippi for over one hundred years.² The ‘football’ activity evolved into a social anchor because it was the product of a special investment strategy aimed at promoting the institution and advancing alumni relationships in the early 1900s.³ Social anchors, described as involving cultural activities through the use of physical structures, support the creation, promotion,

¹ William Browning, “MSU’s Davis Wade Stadium Expansion on Schedule,” *The Starkville Dispatch*, August 10, 2013, p. 6A.

² William Foster and Craig Hyatt, “Inventing Team Tradition: A Conceptual Model for the Strategic Development of Fan Nations,” *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 8 (2008): 266, 269. The authors describe a “fan nation” as “comprised mostly of fans who are not [actual] citizens of cities” and who come together by utilizing “an imagined cohesiveness they share” with others through the use of myths, symbols, tangible objects, and rituals.

³ John Knox Bettersworth, *People’s University: The Centennial History of Mississippi State* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1980). See also “University History,” *Mississippi State University*, accessed September 2, 2014, from: <http://msstate.edu/web/about/history.php>. Now Mississippi State University, the institution was known as Mississippi A&M until 1932, and as Mississippi State College until 1958.

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and maintenance of a group or individual identity.⁴ Mississippi A&M was not alone in using football as a community binding mechanism through the creation of permanent structures.⁵ Such strategies had their long-established roots in Ivy League institutions, beginning with Harvard University's construction of Harvard Stadium in 1903.⁶ Local obsession with football at Mississippi A&M reflected this increased attraction to the game. Geographer Blake Gumprecht suggests football forged strong bonds in southern communities because it highlighted "rugged masculinity in an age when industrialization was forcing many people off the land."⁷ Further, football offered the chance to challenge the North, when southerners felt that the honor of the South needed a chance for redemption.⁸

The construction and renovation of sporting structures provided many communities with sites to accumulate heritage and showcase the

⁴ Chad Seifried and Aaron Clopton, "An Alternative View of Public Subsidy and Sport Facilities Through Social Anchor Theory," *City, Culture and Society*, 4 (2013): 50. "According to the authors, social capital is the aggregate of the quality relationships and networks of individual members within a community and showed to be both an individual attribute and a community asset."

⁵ Blake Gumprecht, "Stadium Culture: College Athletics and the Making of Place in the American College Town," *Southeastern Geographer*, 43 (2003): 28-53.

⁶ Ron A. Smith, "Far More than Commercialism: Stadium Building from Harvard's Innovation to Stanford's 'Dirt Bowl.'" *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 25 (2008): 1453-1474. Smith noted Harvard was able to achieve the creation of Harvard Stadium in 1903 through a \$100,000 gift from the class of 1879 whose members wanted to see the football team play in a better facility than its predecessor Soldier Field. Gate receipts of \$33,000 from the previous season were also used to help fund the construction of revolutionary venue (p. 1456). See also Report of the President of Harvard College, 1900-1901, Harvard University Archives, 19. President of Harvard College, 1902-1903, Harvard University Archives, 41. See also, Brian M. Ingrassia, *The Rise of the Gridiron University: Higher Education's Uneasy Alliance with Big-Time Football* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2012); Raymond Schmidt, *Shaping College Football: The Transformation of an American Sport, 1919-1930* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2007); John. S. Watterson, *College Football: History, Spectacle, Controversy* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002); Smith, "Far More than Commercialism," 1453-1474. Throughout the Northeast, other schools such as Syracuse University (Archbold Stadium in 1907), Princeton University (Palmer Stadium in 1914), and Yale University (Yale Bowl in 1914) followed the Harvard model.

⁷ Grumprecht, "Stadium Culture," 39.

⁸ J. Steven Picou, "Football," *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, eds. C. R. Wilson and W. Ferris (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 1221-1224. Andrew Doyle, "Turning the Tide: College Football and Southern Progressivism," *Southern Cultures*, 3 (1997): 28-51.

history of their respective institutions.⁹ Sport historian Maureen Smith notes that construction of new sport facilities provide the opportunity to build, or invent, new traditions and history.¹⁰ Football stadia, in essence, became a synecdochical image of their home communities because of their immense physical size and cultural significance.¹¹ Grumprecht similarly emphasizes the importance of college stadia to communities by recognizing them as the largest and most complex buildings in an area, capable of seating thousands of fans willing to make a pilgrimage to the site. Important social and economic outcomes produced a “permanent imprint on the landscape and local way of life” with respect to transportation planning, governmental budgeting, and seasonal social events.¹²

The use of football stadia to enhance alumni giving, produce revenue, and improve ‘brand’ awareness of institutions increased throughout the 1920s.¹³ Social historian Brian Ingrassia argues, “consumerism” and “new communications technology turned football into a hugely popular cultural spectacle.”¹⁴ He also suggests that “well intentioned progressives had ... made sport permanent by creating athletic departments, constructing concrete stadiums, and

⁹ Adam G. Pflieger, Chad S. Seifried, and Brian P. Soebbing, “The Moral Obligation to Preserve Heritage through Sport and Recreation Facilities,” *Sport Management Review*, 16 (2013): 378-387. Pflieger, Seifried, and Soebbing argued that sport facilities are sites of significant heritage accumulation and value. See also Adam G. Pflieger and Chad S. Seifried, “Is Building New the Only Option? A Teaching Approach to Heritage Management,” *Sport Management Education Journal*, 6 (2012): 32-42.

¹⁰ Maureen M. Smith, “From ‘The Finest Ballpark in America’ to ‘The Jewel of the Waterfront’: The Construction of San Francisco’s Major League Baseball Stadiums,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 25 (2008): 1529-1546.

¹¹ W. Maennig and S. du Plessis, “Sport Stadia, Sporting Events and Urban Development: International Experience and the Ambitions of Durban,” *Urban Forum*, 20 (2009): 67. Maennig and du Plessis defined synecdoche and synecdochical images as “cases where an element of a larger set (such as one building in a city) comes to represent the set.” See also Pflieger, Seifried, and Soebbing, “A Moral Obligation to Preserve Heritage Through Sport and Recreation Facilities,” 383. Pflieger, Seifried, and Soebbing expanded the concept of synecdoche to include physically and culturally dominating and significant sporting facilities.

¹² Grumprecht, “Stadium Culture,” 35.

¹³ Schmidt, *Shaping College Football*, 39; Grumprecht, “Stadium Culture,” 35; Smith, “Far more than commercialism,” 1453-1474. The University of California at Berkeley, Ohio State, Oklahoma, Stanford, Washington, Nebraska, Illinois, Michigan, and Minnesota, among many other institutions, created permanent structures.

¹⁴ Ingrassia, *The Rise of the Gridiron University*, 171. See also page 9 where Ingrassia suggested “commercial culture became manifested most concretely in campus stadiums.”

hiring a corps of professional experts.”¹⁵ Several scholars provide support for the popularity of football and the importance of permanent stadia. Raymond Schmidt argues that by 1929 “college football was believed to have an estimated drawing power of \$50 million a year with well over 50 percent of that representing profit” to the university beyond football expenses.¹⁶ According to William Freeman, the decade of the 1920s saw the increase of seating capacity for 135 football-playing colleges and universities go from 1 to 2.5 million, which helped increase profits and double attendance (i.e., to 29 million).¹⁷

With a recent \$75 million investment by the university, donors, and Mississippi State University fans, the 2013-2014 renovation and expansion brought the capacity of Davis Wade Stadium at Scott Field to 61,337 and preserved a significant part of northeast Mississippi’s history and culture. A historic review of the stadium and its social implications appears fitting, as it celebrates its 100th year of service. Our review offers a descriptive history of Davis Wade Stadium from 1914 to 2014 and describes the prominent individuals involved with creating one of the most unique collegiate football experiences in the south. Social historian Colin Howell identifies sport as a viable place to understand modernization suggesting “despite the criticisms levelled against the model [i.e., modernization], it is a useful means to understand the changing character of sporting practice.” Howell emphasizes that modern sport “involves secularism, bureaucratization, quantification, specialization, formal organization, and record keeping.”¹⁸ He finds modernization as “quite benign and even useful in some respects.”¹⁹ Other writers present sport as a complex activity and stadia as the

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Schmidt, *Shaping College Football*, 6.

¹⁷ William H. Freeman, “College Athletics in the Twenties: The Golden Age or Fool’s Gold?” (paper presented at the Pre-Convention Symposium on the History of Sport and Physical Education at the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, Seattle, Washington, March, 1977), 9. For more period specific information see also: Jesse F. Steiner. *Americans at Play: Recent Trends in Recreation and Leisure Time Activities* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1933).

¹⁸ Colin D. Howell, “On Metcalfe, Marx, and materialism: Reflections on the writing of sport history in the postmodern age,” *Sport History Review*, 29 (1998): 100.

¹⁹ Ibid.

result of innovations prompted by consumerism.²⁰ Richard Gruneau, in *Modernization or Hegemony*, argues modern sport is “a reflection of capitalist social processes” and portrays modernization “as an expression of class power, social control, and the dominant ideology” producing goods and services for individual or shared consumption.²¹ Others, such as Barrie Houlihan and Mick Green, suggest modernization within sport regularly involves “continuous service improvement” and that sport is able to advance the discourse on modernization.²²

Sport stadia, such as Davis Wade Stadium, serving as concrete theatres “confirmed college sport’s place as a permanent university activity that exploited consumerist desires.”²³ The establishment and maintenance of stadia on university campuses also inferred “institutional supremacy” and the continued efforts of the university to modernize its institution in response to stakeholder preferences (e.g., alumni, students, local community) and/or consumer groups.²⁴ Stadia provide evidence of multiple innovations and technologies used to sustain and improve the economic desirability of football as a product and service for fans.²⁵

Modernization has previously been used to study the evolution of sport stadia.²⁶ Sport Management scholars Chad Seifried and Donna Pastore employed several perspectives on modernization provided by historians Melvin Adelman, Allen Guttman, and John Bale. They contend that the modernization of stadia emerged from advancements

²⁰ Barrie Houlihan and Mick Green. “Modernization and Sport: The Reform of Sport England and UK Sport,” *Public Administration*, 87 (2009): 688-690. See also Richard Gruneau, “Modernization or Hegemony: Two Views on Sport and Social Development,” *Not just a Game: Essays in Canadian Sport Sociology* (1988): 13; Vern Dickinson, “Modernization and Sport,” *Quest*, 24 (1975): 49.

²¹ Gruneau, “Modernization or Hegemony,” 9, 23-24.

²² Houlihan and Green, “Modernization and Sport,” 681.

²³ Ingrassia, *The Rise of the Gridiron University*, 12.

²⁴ Schmidt, *Shaping College Football*, 151.

²⁵ Houlihan and Green, “Modernization and Sport,” 679. See also Gruneau, “Modernization or Hegemony,” 29.

²⁶ Chad Seifried and Donna Pastore, “Analyzing the First Permanent Professional Baseball and Football Structures in the United States: How Expansion and Renovation changed them into Jewel Boxes,” *Sport History Review*, 40 (2009): 168; Chad Seifried and Donna Pastore, “This Stadium Looks and Tastes just like the others: Cookie Cutter Era Facilities from 1953-1991,” *Sport History Review*, 40 (2009): 32; Chad Seifried and Donna Pastore, “Analyzing Baseball Facilities in the United States Pre-1903: The Temporary Homes,” *Journal of Sport History*, 37 (2010): 402-403.

in communication technology, construction materials (e.g., steel framing and concrete), and spectator services.²⁷ Moreover, Seifred and Pastore promote modernization as a useful organizational lens to view historical data on sport stadia because it showcases them as products representing evolving consumerism.²⁸ Our review will demonstrate that capitalist pressures to improve the football spectacle for a variety of customers and participants influenced the modernization of Davis Wade Stadium.²⁹ We shall illustrate that the planned rate of change resulted from the need to adapt the space to meet changing technologies and modern consumer preferences.³⁰ We further suggest that because activities in football stadia have to pay for the space they occupy, capitalism prompted the pursuit of innovations to showcase modernization.³¹

The Origins of Football at Mississippi A&M

The first football game on the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Mississippi's (i.e., Mississippi A&M) campus was played on Thanksgiving Day in 1892 when the faculty challenged the student body to a game. W. M. Matthews was selected to lead the student body team and was later responsible for forming the first formal team, which consisted of seventeen players from around the country.³² Under the direction of Matthews, the team's first sanctioned game against another institution took place on Saturday, November 16, 1895,

²⁷ Alan Guttman, *From Ritual to Record: The Nature of Modern Sport* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979). See also Melvin L. Adelman, *A Sporting Time: New York City and the Rise of Modern Athletics, 1820-70* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 5-10; Dickinson, "Modernization and Sport," 50.

²⁸ John Bale, *Sport, Space, and the City* (Caldwell, NJ: Routledge, 2001), 47; John Bale, "The Changing Face of Football: Stadiums and Communities," *Soccer & Society*, 1 (2000): 91-101; John Bale, "International Sports History as Innovation Diffusion," *Sport History Review*, 15 (1984): 39; Robert Sack, *Human Territoriality: Its Theory and History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 181.

²⁹ "International Sports," 41, 46-47; Seifried, "The Evolution of Professional Baseball and Football Structures," 57, 64, 67.

³⁰ Dickinson, "Modernization and Sport," 55; Seifried, "The Evolution of Professional Baseball and Football Structures," 57.

³¹ Sack, *Human Territoriality*, 163; Adelman, *A Sporting Time*, 7; Bale, "International Sports," 41; Gruneau, "Modernization or Hegemony," 27.

³² Bo Carter, "It All Started at Durant," *The Alumnus*, 53: 24-26. See Also "An Historical Synopsis of Mississippi State Athletics," Letter to Student Body, 1978, Vertical File: Athletic Dept., General, Cabinet 1, Drawer 2, Mitchell Memorial Library, Mississippi State University (Mississippi State, MS).

against Southwestern Baptist University (SBU).³³ The contest, played on the parade grounds located between campus and the adjacent railroad tracks, ended with a 21 to 0 loss.³⁴ Following the defeat, the students rallied to raise \$300 in order to hire J. B. Hildebrand as Mississippi A&M's first football coach.³⁵ With Hildebrand at the helm in 1895, A&M joined the South's first collegiate conference, the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association (SIAA), and hosted SBU for a rematch that took place at the Starkville Fairgrounds.³⁶

Despite the growing fervor for football on the campus, a yellow fever scare and the Spanish-American War sidelined football for four years.³⁷ After the furlough, Irwin Dancy Sessums was appointed as the athletic department overseer and encouraged to awaken the dormant football program. Sessums wasted little time and recruited L. B. Harvey, a veteran and star player from Georgetown College in Kentucky, to serve Mississippi A&M as a player-coach. On October 28, 1901, Harvey and Mississippi A&M won the school's first football game, defeating the University of Mississippi by a score of 17 to 0 in a game played on the infield of the Starkville Racetrack.³⁸ With the victory, the long-standing rivalry between Mississippi A&M and the University of Mississippi was born. Such rivalries were established throughout the South during the turn of the century and are recognized as important to the growth of football and the selection of competition sites.³⁹ For Mississippi State and Ole Miss, the rivalry was established early when a coffin became the unofficial symbol of the contest after A&M students paraded around with a coffin that hypothetically carried the body of

³³ "About Union University," *Union University*, accessed September 4, 2014 from: <http://www.uu.edu/about/history.cfm>. Southwestern Baptist University, now known as Union University, is a small private Baptist university in Jackson, Tennessee.

³⁴ Michael Nemeth, *Mississippi State University Football Vault: The History of the Bulldogs* (Atlanta, GA: Whitman Publishing, 2009).

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.* The Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association (SIAA) was founded in 1894 by Dr. William Dudley as a seven-member association. The next year, in 1895, the association grew to nineteen members, including: Alabama, Auburn, Clemson, Cumberland, Georgia, Georgia Tech, Kentucky, Louisiana State, Mercer, Mississippi A&M (now Mississippi State), Nashville, North Carolina, Mississippi, Sewanee, Southwestern Presbyterian (now Rhodes), Tennessee, Texas, Tulane, and Vanderbilt.

³⁷ Tony Barnhart, *Southern Fried Football: The History, The Passion, and Glory of the Great Southern Game* (Chicago, IL: Triumph Books, 2000).

³⁸ Nemeth, *Mississippi State University Football Vault: The History of the Bulldogs*.

³⁹ Grumprecht, "Stadium Culture," 42-43.

Ole Miss after victories.⁴⁰

Prior to the 1903 season, Sessums continued to build the program by hiring Dan Martin as the next head coach. During Martin's time at Mississippi A&M, he contributed to the establishment of the Mississippi State-Ole Miss rivalry by initiating the tradition of playing an annual Thanksgiving Day game.⁴¹ The game, which also paid homage to the first ever football game at Mississippi A&M, has grown into the present day Egg Bowl rivalry game. Next, Martin's squad adopted the Bulldogs nickname and played their first game on the present day campus in Starkville, Mississippi, at Hardy Field.⁴² Hardy Field, constructed in March 1905 with the support of Mississippi A&M President Jack Hardy, was a livestock pasture just east of the Textile Building on campus.⁴³ In addition to on-campus games, the Bulldogs began to play important games in the state capital, Jackson. Scheduling games at larger metropolitan locations (i.e., neutral sites) was not uncommon, as football games on many campuses throughout the south could not produce sufficient gate receipts. For example, the University of Florida scheduled games in Jacksonville, Miami, and Tampa, while Oklahoma played games in Oklahoma City and Dallas.⁴⁴

In 1909, William Dean Chadwick took over as athletic director and head football coach. At a meeting in February of 1910, Chadwick devised a strategy to raise the necessary funds for the construction of

⁴⁰ Michael B. Ballard, *Maroon and White: Mississippi State University, 1878-2003* (Jackson, MS: University of Mississippi Press, 2008).

⁴¹ Ballard, *Maroon and White: Mississippi State University, 1878-2003, 2008*. *Nemeth, Mississippi State University Football Vault: The History of the Bulldogs*.

⁴² "An Historical Analysis of Mississippi State Athletics," University Communications, 1975, Vertical File: Athletic Dept., General: Cabinet 1, Drawer 2, Mitchell Memorial Library, Mississippi State University (Mississippi State, MS). Despite the official nickname change to Bulldogs, the Mississippi A&M (Mississippi State University) football program continued to be known as the Maroons until the 1960s.

⁴³ "Keep the Bulldogs Home: The Seating Option Plan," Correspondence from the Office of the President, June 25, 1982, Vertical File: Athletic Dept., General: Cabinet 1, Drawer 2, Mitchell Memorial Library, Mississippi State University (Mississippi State, MS). The Bulldog football program played their first contest at Hardy Field against Howard College (now Samford University) on November 11, 1905.

⁴⁴ Grumprecht, "Stadium Culture," 35, 39.

a semi-permanent wooden grandstand around Hardy Field.⁴⁵ Despite the grandstand addition, many Bulldog football games continued to take place in Jackson in order to better meet the demands of the program's growing number of fans. However, in 1911, tragedy struck the fairgrounds in Jackson when approximately 1,000 spectators attending a game between A&M and Ole Miss were injured from a collapse of the overfilled wooden grandstands.⁴⁶ With the collapse in mind, Chadwick desired to build a safer on-campus stadium.⁴⁷

1914: New Athletic Field to Scott Field

Just prior to the 1914 season, strategies were put into place to construct a new on-campus football stadium. Athletic Director William Dean Chadwick felt that Hardy Field had outlived its purpose and consumer usefulness.⁴⁸ After careful consideration of locations, "the field was placed in a vacant pasture just off the gravel road that led from campus to downtown Starkville."⁴⁹ Members of the Mississippi A&M student body deemed the new field, which provided a total capacity of 7,200, *New Athletic Field*. Construction of the modish facility was completed prior to the opening game of the 1914 season, which the Bulldogs won 54 to 0 over the Marion Military Institute.⁵⁰

As the rivalry between Mississippi A&M and Ole Miss intensified, cities from around the state began to bid on subsequent games as the demand still exceeded the capacity of New Athletic Field. By offering discounts to students, Tupelo won the 1915 bid and hosted the game at the Tupelo Fairgrounds. Some constituents of Starkville

⁴⁵ John W. Bailey, *The M Book of Athletics – Mississippi A&M College* (Richmond, VA: Curtis Printing Company, 1930). Head coach Dan Martin stepped down in 1907, and was replaced by Fred John Furman. Furman became the first full-time athletic director and football coach in Mississippi A&M history suggesting an increasing interest to address the commercialism of football on campus.

⁴⁶ William G. Barner and Danny McKenzie, *The Egg Bowl* (2nd ed.) (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2007). The grandstands were built less than a week prior to the contest.

⁴⁷ Nemeth, *Mississippi State University Football Vault: The History of the Bulldogs*. Chadwick served as athletic director from 1914 until 1930.

⁴⁸ Office of the President, "Keep the Bulldogs Home: The Seating Option Plan."

⁴⁹ Nemeth, *Mississippi State University Football Vault: The History of the Bulldogs*, 2009, 9.

⁵⁰ "An Historical Analysis of Mississippi State Athletics," University Communications, 1975. See also Nemeth, *Mississippi State University Football Vault: The History of the Bulldogs*.

and Oxford were unhappy because the potential economic impact produced by the game was taken away from their communities.⁵¹ For Mississippi A&M, the loss of revenue was prominent as the Bulldog athletic department faced a myriad of financial obstacles over the next few seasons, particularly in their attempts to pay off the debt for the construction of New Athletic Field. The student body helped by donating \$3 per student. However, another setback occurred in 1917 when the United States entered World War I, and the average game attendance decreased to around 1,000 fans. With limited resources and decreasing enrollment, future games against Ole Miss were put out for bid. Clarksdale, Mississippi, a small city in the Mississippi Delta, won the right to host the 1919 game that was played on the front lawn of Elizabeth Dorr High School.⁵²

As the 1920 football season ended, the student body voted to change the name of New Athletic Field to promote football and the institution, and the students selected the name, Scott Field.⁵³ Donald Magruder Scott was a football letterman in both the 1915 and 1916 seasons and became nationally known after representing the United States Olympic team as both a distance runner and an equestrian.⁵⁴ In the same offseason, Mississippi A&M left the SIAA and joined thirteen other institutions in 1921 to form the Southern Conference. For the inaugural year, the organization boasted a membership that consisted of Alabama, Auburn, Georgia, Georgia Tech, Kentucky, Mississippi A&M, Tennessee, Virginia, Clemson, North Carolina, North Carolina

⁵¹ Barner and McKenzie, *The Egg Bowl* (2nd ed.).

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ "Facilities: Memorial Stadium," *University of Illinois Athletics*, accessed October 1, 2014 from: <http://www.fightingillini.com/facilities/memorialstadium.html>. See also "Facilities: Bryant-Denny Stadium," *University of Alabama Athletics*, accessed October 1, 2014, from: <http://www.rolltide.com/facilities/bryant-denny.html>. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, intercollegiate football stadiums across the country began to adopt names in honor of prominent university figures or as memorials to the soldiers who served the United States in WWI. For example, Memorial Stadium in Champaign, IL opened in 1923 and was built and named to honor the veterans of the First World War including the names of fallen soldiers on its support columns. In Tuscaloosa, AL, Denny Stadium (now Bryant-Denny Stadium) was opened in 1929 and named for university president, Dr. George Denny.

⁵⁴ "Scott Field," *The Mississippi A&M Alumnus*, 1 (1921): 17. See also correspondence from the Sports Information Department to the Mississippi A&M Student Body, 1978, Vertical File: Athletic Dept., General: Cabinet 1, Drawer 2, Mitchell Memorial Library, Mississippi State University (Mississippi State, MS).

State, Washington and Lee, Virginia Tech, and Maryland.⁵⁵ The following season, an additional six schools were added to bring the total to nineteen institutions.⁵⁶ The Southern Conference was an agent of modernization because it required compliance to standards to maintain and/or earn membership.⁵⁷ For example, minimum stadium size, shared gate receipts, start times, and regular schedules were standardized. The establishment of conferences, leagues, and associations helped to transform college football from a simple student-led activity into a complex commercial business capable of producing spectacles for consumption.⁵⁸

As Mississippi A&M began to host more prominent institutions, administrators recognized the need to expand Scott Field's seating capacity.⁵⁹ In 1928, the main grandstand was expanded by 3,000 seats "at a cost of \$15,000."⁶⁰ Portable stands, with a capacity of around 3,000, were added on the east side to further accommodate consumer demand. Similarly, Brian Ingrassia found other institutions completing changes or building new stadia because football was increasingly recognized as a viable business investment. He notes the "continuing evolution of national competitive parity and the rising popularity of intersectional play ... easily exceeded the capacity of most of the old style-stadia [i.e., wooden]" around this time.⁶¹ Additional improvements in road construction and increases in "automobile ownership" further supported the "rise of the stadium."⁶² Finally,

⁵⁵ Sid Noble, "A. and M. one of the First Southern Colleges," *The Commercial Appeal*, July 22, 1923, 1.

⁵⁶ Noble, "A. and M. one of the First Southern Colleges," July 22, 1923. In 1922, Florida, Louisiana State, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tulane, and Vanderbilt left the SIAA to join the Southern Conference. See also "Southern Conference: Constitution & By-laws 1926," Vertical File: Athletic Dept., General: Cabinet 1, Drawer 2, Mitchell Memorial Library, Mississippi State University (Mississippi State, MS).

⁵⁷ Marvin Washington, "Field Approaches to Institutional Change: The Evolution of the National Collegiate Athletic Association 1906-1995," *Organizational Studies*, 25(2004): 393-414.

⁵⁸ Gruneau, "Modernization or Hegemony," 14, 24.

⁵⁹ Sid Noble, "Things Being Done at A. and M. College," *The Mississippi Builder*, April 19, 1924, 19. Noble noted that there was consent among college administrators, football personnel, and fans that the facilities were inadequate considering the increased and growing interest in Southern Conference football matchups.

⁶⁰ Bailey, *The M Book of Athletics - Mississippi A & M College*, 13.

⁶¹ Ingrassia, *The Rise of the Gridiron University*, 39.

⁶² Schmidt, *Shaping College Football*, 41. Registered cars in the United States increased from 2.5 million to roughly 20 million between 1915 and 1925.

advances in construction techniques and the use of reinforced steel and concrete were sought because those materials were adaptable and able to respect the “growing preference for modern, utilitarian structures capable of maximizing the number of seats in preferred locations and controlling access to and from the building.”⁶³

1930-1970: Mississippi State College Transition to Mississippi State University

In 1932, President Hugh Critz of the newly renamed Mississippi State College created an athletic board of control to make personnel and facility construction decisions.⁶⁴ In the same year, Mississippi State College defected from the Southern Conference along with twelve other member institutions to form the Southeastern Conference.⁶⁵ Shortly after the turnover in 1934, Mississippi State College president, George Duke Humphrey, hired Major Ralph Irvin Sasse to serve as the next head football coach. With a new name for the institution and a new coach, the football program was poised to become nationally known. In 1935, Mississippi State College burst into the national spotlight by winning eight contests and defeating the United States Military Academy (i.e., Army) at West Point, New York, 13 to 7.⁶⁶

In the same year as Mississippi's impressive victory over Army, President Franklin D. Roosevelt discontinued the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) in favor of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) to help fund and facilitate public works

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Minutes from “Meeting of Athletic Board of Control,” January 11, 1933. Hugh Critz (1930 – 1934) Presidential Papers: Drawer 5 (448) – Athletic Board of Control, Mitchell Memorial Library, Mississippi State University (Mississippi State, MS).

⁶⁵ Richard Scott, *SEC Football: 75 Years of Pride and Passion* (Minneapolis, MN: MBI Publishing, 2008). Mississippi State College defected from the Southern Conference to form a more localized conference with the University of Alabama, Auburn University, University of Florida, University of Georgia, University of Kentucky, Louisiana State University, University of Mississippi, University of Tennessee, and Vanderbilt University. In addition to the former Southern institutions, Georgia Institute of Technology, Tulane University, and The University of the South also joined as founding members.

⁶⁶ Carter, “It All Started at Durant,” 26.

projects.⁶⁷ The momentum produced by winning teams and the newly available government funds (\$55,000 of Public Works Administration (PWA) Grants and \$15,000 of funding from an institutional loan) helped increase the capacity of Scott Field to 26,000.⁶⁸ Completed in 1936, the capacity increase emerged through the construction of an 8,000-seat reinforced steel and concrete grandstand on the west side of the stadium. In addition, the grandstand previously running the length of the west side was moved to the end zone and reinforced with brick to make the stands permanent.⁶⁹

In 1939, Allyn McKeen took over as head football coach, and during his tenure, he guided the Bulldogs to their only Southeastern Conference title in 1941 and had an overall record of 65-19-1.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Edwin Amenta, Kathleen Dunleavy, and Mary Bernstein. "Stolen Thunder? Huey Long's 'Share Our Wealth,' Political Mediation, and the Second New Deal," *American Sociological Review*, 59 (1994): 691; Gavin Wright, "The Political Economy of New Deal Spending: An Econometric Analysis," *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 56 (1974): 30-38; Harold L. Ickes, *The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes, the First Thousand Days, 1933-1936* (New York, De Capo Press, 1953), 375-376.

⁶⁸ Correspondence from P. B. Parker (Director of Athletics) to President G. D. Humphrey, November 9, 1936, George Duke Humphrey (1934-1935) Presidential Papers: Drawer 10 (875) – Physical Plant – Stadium West Side, Folder 2, Mitchell Memorial Library, Mississippi State University (Mississippi State, MS). The college offered a loan to the Athletic Department at 6% interest. See also Correspondence from Pat Harrison to J. E. Adams, August 3, 1936, George Duke Humphrey (1934-1935) Presidential Papers: Drawer 10 (874) – Physical Plant – Stadium West Side, Folder 1, Mitchell Memorial Library, Mississippi State University (Mississippi State, MS). Harrison indicated that the college planned to ask for WPA funding. See also Correspondence from President G. D. Humphrey to Senator Pat Harrison, September 9, 1936, George Duke Humphrey (1934-1935) Presidential Papers: Drawer 10 (874) – Physical Plant – Stadium West Side, Folder 1, Mitchell Memorial Library, Mississippi State University (Mississippi State, MS). The correspondence indicated that the WPA funding request had been approved.

⁶⁹ Ballard, *Maroon and White: Mississippi State University, 1878-2003, 2008*. Office of the President, "Keep the Bulldogs Home: The Seating Option Plan."

⁷⁰ W. P. Dozier, Jr., "Sasse Confined to Home After Giving Up Post," *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, November 11, 1937, 6. See also correspondence from anonymous athletic supporter to President G. D. Humphrey, January 26, 1938, George Duke Humphrey (1934-1945) Presidential Papers: Drawer 1 (46) – Athletic Dept., Folder 1, Mitchell Memorial Library, Mississippi State University (Mississippi State, MS). "Colonel Parker Loses Position at Miss. State," *Herald Journal: Sunday Spartanburg*, January 23, 1938, 1. Shortly after being promoted to lieutenant-colonel, Sasse suffered a nervous breakdown and was advised by his physician that he should no longer coach the Bulldogs. His doctor's advice prompted his unexpected mid-season resignation. Athletic Director Paul Parker took over as head coach for one season, before being replaced by President G. D. Humphrey with Spike Nelson, who lasted only a single season. See also Nemeth, *Mississippi State University Football Vault: The History of the Bulldogs*.

Success during the McKeen era allowed Bulldog fans to support another stadium expansion planned in 1947. Although the expansion was questioned by the college's administration due to a slight decrease in demand during the prior season, the expansion went forward and Scott Field's seating capacity grew to 32,000 at a cost of approximately \$500,000.⁷¹ During the renovation, the west side concrete stands were expanded to hold 15,000 fans, 12,000 additional concrete seats were built on the east side, and 5,000 seats were added to the end zone.⁷² Jim Lacey, writer for *The Starkville Daily News*, described the new renovation; "Mississippi State's long dreamed-of, modern stadium is now a reality. With this magnificent mass of steel and concrete which seats 36,000 people completed, State now has the fifth largest stadium in the Southeastern Conference."⁷³

In the years following the expansion, additional facility and landscape improvements were made to improve the look and accessibility of the area surrounding the stadium. In 1949, two bordering roads were paved, Highway 12 and the Gillespie Street Extension, which allowed easier access to and from the stadium.⁷⁴ H. F. Brown suggests these renovations stemmed from the shared ideology of post-World War II America which required all sport stadia to support "good visibility from all parts of the facility," be "safe, flexible, and convenient for all users," and "accommodate the needs of sponsors."⁷⁵ Geographer John F. Rooney, Jr. suggests that stadium capacities increased during the 1950s and that traffic patterns required the paving of roads and the creation of parking to take care of massive crowds desiring to come to campus a handful of times each year.⁷⁶ Thus, sport entrepreneurs like those in Starkville, recognized the complaint about the lack of parking

⁷¹ Harry W. Stevens, "Specifications for Additions and Alterations to Football Stadium," April 1947, Fred Tom Mitchell (1945-1953) Presidential Papers, Drawer 8 (883), Physical Plant – Buildings, Folder 1, Mitchell Memorial Library, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, MS. See also Bob V. Moulder (ed.), *Mississippi State University: The First One Hundred Years*, Mississippi State University Centennial Committee, 1978.

⁷² Office of the President, "Keep the Bulldogs Home: The Seating Option Plan."

⁷³ Jim Lacey, *The Starkville Daily News*, March 25, 1949, 1.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ H. F. Brown, "Stadia 1," *The Architect's Journal*, 169 (1979): 142.

⁷⁶ John F. Rooney, Jr., "Up from the Mines and Out from the Prairies: Some Geographical Implications of Football in the United States," *Geographical Review*, 59 (1969): 475.

and other services within the stadium as legitimate.⁷⁷

Following McKeen's removal as head coach in 1949, five different head coaches in thirteen seasons were unable to reach McKeen's win total.⁷⁸ Despite failing to match the success of McKeen, teams of the 1950s continued to play in front of larger crowds. Even though local attendance grew, the Bulldogs continued to participate in neutral site games in Jackson. In 1945, the Mississippi Veterans Memorial Stadium in Jackson was named to honor the sacrifice and dedication of the state's World War II veterans. It was expected that the stadium would attract state institutions, specifically Mississippi State College and the University of Mississippi, to play marquee games in Jackson rather than in neighboring states such as Tennessee and Louisiana who also sought their games.⁷⁹ The Mississippi legislature passed a bill in 1946 donating twenty-nine acres of land to Hinds County to construct a new facility.⁸⁰ The facility, originally named War Veterans Memorial Stadium, consisted of eighty-two sections and 35,000 seats.⁸¹ After some controversy regarding the investment, Hinds County passed a \$700,000 bond issue in late 1947, and construction began in early 1948. As progress slowed and became more expensive, Hinds County requested an additional \$800,000 from taxpayers. Hinds County citizens voted no, and the stadium was left partially unfinished, but in a usable condition for the 1950 season.

Despite the War Memorial Stadium's limited seating capacity,

⁷⁷ Chad Seifried, "The Evolution of Professional Football Structures in the United States 1850 to present: Toward an Ideal-Type," *Sport History Review*, 41 (2010): 65.

⁷⁸ Correspondence from C. R. Noble to President F. T. Mitchell, January 18, 1949, Fred Tom Mitchell (1945-1953) Presidential Papers, Drawer 1 (52), Athletic Department, Folder 3, Mitchell Memorial Library, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, MS. In correspondence, Noble recommended Arthur W. "Slick" Morton as the next head coach. See also Nemeth, *Mississippi State University Football Vault: The History of the Bulldogs*, 2009. Morton served as head coach from 1949 to 1951, Murray Warmath from 1952 to 1953, Darrell Royal from 1954 to 1955, Wade Walker from 1956 to 1961, and Paul Davis from 1962 to 1966.

⁷⁹ Rusty Hampton and Butch John, "Memorial: Mississippi State, Ole Miss Officials Concerned with Stadium Procedure," *The Clarion Ledger*, December 23, 1984, 1D, 3D. Cities in neighboring states such as New Orleans and Memphis often attempted to host major Southeastern Conference matchups.

⁸⁰ Andy Ross, "A History of Mississippi Veterans Memorial Stadium," *Mississippi Sports Magazine*, April 26, 2012, accessed January 18, 2013 from <http://www.mssportsmagazine.com/msm-features/a-history-of-mississippi-veterans-memorial-stadium>.

⁸¹ The eighty-two sections of the Mississippi Veterans Memorial Stadium were purposefully chosen to represent the state's eighty-two counties.

the newly renamed Mississippi State University played a conference game against Louisiana State University in Jackson in 1958. The highly ballyhooed matchup was a quick sell-out, and convinced local legislators and constituents that an expansion to the capital city stadium was necessary. In 1960, the state of Mississippi obtained ownership of the War Memorial Stadium, which led to the enactment of legislation and a bond issue to expand the stadium to 46,021 and a name change to Mississippi Memorial Stadium.⁸² The construction was completed in 1961, and Mississippi Memorial Stadium became the third largest stadium to host games in the Southeastern Conference.⁸³ After the renovation, Mississippi State University split its home games between Starkville and Jackson to take advantage of the larger crowds.⁸⁴ Meanwhile, back in Starkville, first-year President D. W. Colvard approved a minor renovation on the stadium press box.⁸⁵ Press box renovation efforts were common during this era to assist the newly developed technology of television, its announcers, and camera operators. Other press accommodations also regularly featured new interview areas or press conference rooms to address increasing media requests.⁸⁶

1970-1985: The Technological Modernization of Scott Field

Throughout the 1970s, Memorial Stadium in Jackson, Mississippi, was surpassed in size, amenities, and prestige across the country. To accommodate the Bulldogs, the Mississippi legislature passed a bill approving a \$3 million bond issue to add 16,000 seats to modernize

⁸² James Saggus, "Overhaul of Stadium Commission Prompted by PEER Report," *The Starkville Daily News*, January 30, 1989.

⁸³ Ross, "A History of Mississippi Veterans Memorial Stadium."

⁸⁴ Memorandum to Members of the Administrative Council from President Colvard, July 15, 1963, D. W. Colvard (1960-1966) Presidential Papers, Box 2, Athletic Department 1962-1963, Mitchell Memorial Library, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, MS. The memorandum stipulated that half of the 1963 "home" contests were to be played in Jackson. Specifically, the Bulldogs would host games against Louisiana State University, Tulane University, and Auburn University in the state's capital.

⁸⁵ Correspondence from Thomas S. Jones to D. W. Colvard, July 31, 1962, D. W. Colvard (1960-1966) Presidential Papers, Box 15, Physical Plant – New Buildings – Press Box at Stadium, Mitchell Memorial Library, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, MS. The press box renovation was designed by architect Thomas S. Jones and completed by Ralph G. Hewlett Construction Company of Starkville, Mississippi.

⁸⁶ Seifried and Pastore, "This Stadium Looks and Tastes," 36.

the aging stadium.⁸⁷ When the stadium construction was finished in 1980, it boasted a capacity of 62,529 and excellent sight lines for fans.⁸⁸ With the newly renovated stadium, and with Scott Field routinely not meeting the athletic department's needs in terms of capacity and amenities, Bulldog fans were forced to drive to Jackson for six "home" games every season, which created financial hardship and discontent among students.⁸⁹ Associate Dean of Mississippi State University's College of Business and Industry, Dr. George Verrall stated in an interview, "It's embarrassing when CBS-TV comes to film Mississippi State and they show the City of Jackson".⁹⁰ Later in the interview, Dr. Verrall pointed out that Mississippi State had the smallest on-campus stadium in the SEC (i.e., 32,000) following the removal of the end zone seating structures in 1982-1983.

Despite the modernization of Memorial Stadium in Jackson, several limitations remained: inconvenient methods for distributing funds to institutions, inefficient ticketing strategies, poor press box conditions, insufficient number of restrooms, and a lack of decoration showcasing the institution's colors and logo.⁹¹ Responding to fan frustration, Athletic Director Carl Maddox and President James D. McComas announced plans to expand Scott Field in an attempt to host more games on campus and to reinvigorate the Bulldog football program by

⁸⁷ Hampton and John, "Memorial: Mississippi State, Ole Miss Officials Concerned with Stadium Procedure."

⁸⁸ "Football Stadium Feasibility Study," prepared for the *War Memorial Stadium Commission*, Table 3.8. See also Ross, "A History of Mississippi Veterans Memorial Stadium." The renovated Mississippi Memorial Stadium featured 42,000 parking spaces (including VIP and RV options), and was located in an easily accessible location for many Mississippi fans.

⁸⁹ Balch, Pratt, Priddy, & Co. CPAs, "Arkansas War Memorial Stadium Accountants Report," June 30, 1966, Little Rock, AR. Similar debates concerning where to play the majority of home football contests were taking place across the country. For example, the University of Arkansas, which played home games at War Memorial Stadium in Little Rock, Arkansas, was involved in a debate concerning how to best meet the needs of the fan nation across the state of Arkansas.

⁹⁰ W. Cantrell, "Trying to Sell 2,000 Seats – 1st Expansion Since the '40's – Say Crowds to Benefit this City," *The Commercial Dispatch*, July 22, 1982, p. 1.

⁹¹ Hampton and John, "Memorial: Mississippi State, Ole Miss Officials Concerned with Stadium Procedure." See also Eric Stringfellow, "Mayor to Seek More Football Games at Memorial Stadium," *The Clarion Ledger*, December 28, 1984. See also, Football Stadium Feasibility Study," prepared for the *War Memorial Stadium Commission*, Table 3.8.

providing a more convenient location for the school's students.⁹²

Scott Field had fallen decades behind the rest of the country in a variety of areas, including technological innovations and seating capacity. When television viewership increased during the 1950s, the American sport consumer began to expect to watch games in their home.⁹³ This compelled significant changes to be made in sport stadia because previous stadia were built with telegraph, radio, and print media interests in mind. Television camera locations and other auxiliary equipment needed to broadcast football were not provided. Due to technological demands from live attendees, large electronic scoreboards were developed to provide instant information that other patrons enjoyed in the comfort of their homes. Stadium managers also found that the use of electronic scoreboards prompted fan engagement (i.e., crowd noise), which television producers and host cities preferred to enhance the spectacle. Electronic messages regularly asked people to cheer, sing, or chant and conveyed important information to them about upcoming events as well as safety announcements. Understanding the potential impact of the electronic scoreboard, advertisers sought opportunities to promote their products and services, which provided additional revenue for institutions.⁹⁴

Seeing that Scott Field lacked technological amenities and a sufficient number of seats, an addition of 14,400 seats was planned for Scott Field, raising the capacity to 46,400. This was to be completed by adding seven rows to the west side, along with a "quarterdeck" around the press box and an upper deck. The seven rows were to consist of approximately 2,000 chair-back seats, while the quarterdeck and lower upper deck contained 1,500 chair-back seats each. Bleacher seats were to be placed in the upper deck to provide additional seating. Along with the capacity increase, a concourse containing additional restrooms and concession stands for the quarterdeck was planned, as well as "soft-slope" ramps at each end of the concourse to allow for

⁹² Barner and McKenzie, *The Egg Bowl* (2nd ed.). Mississippi State University continued to play games at Mississippi Memorial Stadium until 1990, when the Bulldogs were defeated by the Rebels in the annual Egg Bowl contest.

⁹³ Seifried, "The Evolution of Professional Baseball and Football Structures," 66.

⁹⁴ Seifried, "The Evolution of Professional Baseball and Football Structures," 66-67. See also Grumprecht, "Stadium Culture," 44.

easier access for fans and especially those with disabilities.⁹⁵ To better meet the technological needs of the 1980s, a computerized scoreboard was also installed.⁹⁶ The scoreboard measured 25 feet, 4 inches by 38 feet and included a graphics screen that could be utilized for rolling or marquee style messages or advertisements.⁹⁷ Finally, stadium lights were included as a planned addition, allowing for future scheduling of night games.⁹⁸

The construction effort originally designed by architect John Davis of Warren, Knight, and Davis Architecture was an estimated \$7 million project, which included over 7,000 cubic yards of reinforced concrete, steel, and brick façade.⁹⁹ The immense overhaul of Scott Field was scheduled for completion prior to the opening game of the 1985 season.¹⁰⁰ In order to fund the expansion, Mississippi State University charged its 11,000-student population a \$10 per student, per semester fee.¹⁰¹ Additional funds to modernize Scott Field came from the sale of bonds through the city of Starkville, as city aldermen voted to sell a total of \$3 million worth of general obligation bonds. The bonds issued by Morgan Keegan Company, an investment-banking firm in Memphis, Tennessee, were offered to the public at an interest rate of 8.65 percent.¹⁰² Lastly, the athletic department implemented a seating payment structure to secure the remaining necessary capital. The newly installed quarterdeck level seats were offered to Bulldog fans for \$500 per seat, per year for ten years, with optional payment plans to increase their affordability. The lower rows of the upper deck utilized

⁹⁵ Donald Dobb, "Waiting: MSU's Scott Field Project Now 190 Days Past Original Deadline," *The Commercial Dispatch*, February 5, 1985, 1B.

⁹⁶ Joseph Ammerman, "MSU Stadium Expansion Moving Along," *The Starkville Daily News*, February 23, 1985.

⁹⁷ Dennis Greenwood, "New Scoreboard at Scott Field," *The Starkville Daily News*, July 17, 1985.

⁹⁸ Dodd, "Waiting: MSU's Scott Field Project Now 190 Days Past Original Deadline."

⁹⁹ Tom Ball, "Scott Field Expansion, Lighting to be Ready for Sept. 7 Game," *The Starkville Daily News*, May 31, 1985.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ Bill Ross, "Students Support Levy to Expand MSU's Stadium," *The Tupelo Daily Journal*, February 4, 1982. See also Leigh Hogan, "Bonds to Finance Stadium Expansion," *The Commercial Dispatch*, June 22, 1983.

¹⁰² Roland Wilkerson, "Costs Mount for Stadium," *The Commercial Appeal*, December 10, 1983.

similar financial terms, with a lower price of \$200 per seat, per year.¹⁰³

The modernization plan encountered several complications. The lowest construction bids came in at over \$1 million more than the architectural firm's estimated \$7.2 million budget. Of the five initial submissions, the low bid was \$9 million from Jameson and Gibson Construction Company of Memphis, Tennessee, which included a \$7.5 million base fee and \$1.5 million for overruns.¹⁰⁴ In an attempt to lower costs, university officials and the architects reviewed the original proposal and 4,000 seats were removed from the blueprints. In addition, a decision was reached to not renovate the west side restroom facilities and access ramps. With 4,000 seats and improvements eliminated, Jameson and Gibson Construction Company estimated that the project would now cost \$6,877,000.¹⁰⁵

After the cost-saving changes, the project was sent out for a second round of bids with hopes that it would come in under the originally proposed budget of 7.2 million.¹⁰⁶ After once again receiving multiple bids, the university accepted a bid of \$6,047,000 from Engineers Constructors, Inc., of Memphis, Tennessee, to complete the large-scale modernization. In addition to providing the university with the lowest bid, officials were assured a timely completion as the company was a division of Rentenbach, one of the fifty largest construction companies in the United States at the time.¹⁰⁷ Engineers Constructors, Inc. added an extra economic benefit to the community by pledging to hire local carpenters and laborers, as well as using local subcontractors for mechanical, plumbing, and HVAC work.¹⁰⁸ Along with the construction bids, the university and architects accepted bids for the installation of seating. Magnolia State School Products Company was the lowest

¹⁰³ Dodd, "Waiting: MSU's Scott Field Project Now 190 Days Past Original Deadline." See also Office of the President, "Keep the Bulldogs Home: The Seating Option Plan."

¹⁰⁴ Wilkerson, "Costs Mount for Stadium. Jameson and Gibson Construction Company specifically mentioned that the architectural firm failed to include the immense cost that would be required to update the outdated and insufficient wiring throughout Scott Field.

¹⁰⁵ "Stadium Expansion Shaved 4,000 Seats," *The Starkville Daily News*, January 10, 1984.

¹⁰⁶ Billy Watkins, "Second Round of Bids Being Accepted for Scott Field Expansion," *The Clarion Ledger*, March 31, 1984.

¹⁰⁷ Henry Matuszak, "Scott Field Expansion Notes," *The Starkville Daily News*, July 10, 1984. See also "Prospective Stadium Contractor will Hire Locally," *The Starkville Daily News*, May 10, 1984.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

bidder for the seating project, with bids of \$74,004 for plank seating, \$172,246 for stadium seating, and \$241,460 for the stadium seat and plank seating package.¹⁰⁹

As the cost of construction continued to increase, the university was forced to renegotiate the deal with the city of Starkville over bond issue and payments. The renegotiated settlement included permission for the city to use Mississippi State University facilities for the twenty-five year lifespan of the contract. The facility use agreement, which included Scott Field and other available facilities, allotted the city a minimum of six events each year on campus. From this agreement, the Starkville High School football program soon became one of the primary users of the campus stadium, with the stipulation that no games were played on Friday evenings prior to home Mississippi State Bulldog football games.¹¹⁰

As the reconstruction of Scott Field got underway, the project fell behind schedule due to a chain of severe weather events in Northeast Mississippi.¹¹¹ Taking these factors into consideration, the completion date was postponed to September 28, 1985. The construction firm expected the lighting and priority seating sections to be finished and usable by that date. While deemed functional by the project team, the concession stands, press box, and restroom renovations were not completed in time for the regular season football contests.¹¹² As a half-finished facility, Scott Field was ill prepared for the first game of the 1985 season. The construction clutter before the first home game was so immense that President Dr. Donald Zacharias instructed over one hundred university employees to clean the area up and prepare the stadium for the first game, a project that took the entire Friday evening prior to the event.¹¹³

After the completion of the 1985 football season, the seemingly endless project continued. According to *Starkville Dispatch* writer Donald Dobb, the construction company was “ridiculously incorrect in its assessment of the time frame in which the project could be

¹⁰⁹ Matuszak, “Scott Field Expansion Notes.”

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Donald Dobb, “Waiting: MSU’s Scott Field Project Now 190 Days Past Original Deadline.”

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

completed.”¹¹⁴ A twenty-day project extension had been granted, yet construction was 164 days behind schedule. The contract contained a late clause stating that the construction company would be charged \$850 per day. As a result, the university charged \$139,400 to the firm for their tardy efforts. Eventually, the construction was completed, and the Bulldogs had a newly modernized Scott Field to call home in 1986.

1986-2013

In an effort to improve the aesthetics of Scott Field and the surrounding area, a landscape and beautification project was carried out in five phases beginning in 1986. The phases included: 1) the installation of a berm in front of the north end with the MSU logo, 2) a line of Southern magnolias along the north side, extending from end-to-end of the east and west bleachers, 3) shrubbery along the east and west fences, 4) paved plaza areas at the entrances and ticket booths, and 5) the metal poles and fences surrounding and inside the stadium were painted brown to better match the foliage of the Southern fall.¹¹⁵ In addition to the visual changes, the recently constructed stadium ramps required minor repairs. Despite the fact that they were deemed structurally sound by the architectural firm, the ramps swayed as part of the design – a feature that alarmed fans. Fan reaction regarding the swaying ramps led to additional cross bracing beams to stabilize the ramps during mild or severe weather, or heavy foot traffic during mass entrances or exits.¹¹⁶ The cost for the bracing was minimal, but other misfortunes followed. Specifically, there were lengthy gate lines, public address system malfunctions, and a loss of electricity in concessions stands during several home contests.¹¹⁷ One by one the university addressed the issues, and eventually the expansion was deemed a successful milestone for Mississippi State University athletics.

The 1985/86 expansion of Scott Field met the needs of the university, football program, and fans throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s. Due to the progressive design, little work was required on the

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Deborah Roberts, “Stadium to be Setting for Landscaping Jewel,” *The Starkville Daily News*, September 27, 1986.

¹¹⁶ Floyd Ingram and Francis O. McDavid, “Experts Inspect Scott Field Stadium Ramp,” *The Starkville Daily News*, September 30, 1986, pp. 1, 5.

¹¹⁷ Rusty Hampton, “Cross Bracing to be Added at Mississippi State’s Scott Field,” *The Clarion Ledger*, October 2, 1986.

stadium until the late 1990s. In 1999, during Coach Jackie Sherrill's eighth season at the helm of the Bulldog football program, plans were announced that drastically changed the stadium from its older form into a modern, technologically state-of-the-art facility.¹¹⁸ The stadium was renamed Davis Wade Stadium at Scott Field because of a sizable donation given by Floyd Davis Wade, Sr. of Meridian, whose donation was the kick start of the project that would bring the stadium's seating capacity to 52,000.¹¹⁹ Architectural firm Foil Wyatt Architects was hired to draw up the plans, which included two independent phases to the project. First, 50 skyboxes, 2,000 club-level seats, and a 17,000 square foot lounge area would be built atop the east side of the stadium at an estimated cost of between \$17 and \$18 million.¹²⁰ In order to accommodate increasing consumer demands, restroom and concession stand additions were also factored into the first phase.

As part of the second phase, an upper deck on the east side that would hold both chair back and 5,000 to 6,000 bleacher seats would be built.¹²¹ After the bid process, Roy Anderson Corporation from Gulfport was hired as the contractor, and the overall budget for both phases of the project was set at \$22,600,000. Construction crews broke ground on the multi-million dollar renovation and expansion on June 16, 2000, with an expected completion date of October 21, 2001.¹²² Following the construction, Davis Wade Stadium at Scott Field boasted a capacity of 55,000 for the start of the 2002 football campaign.¹²³

According to Rhett Hobart, assistant coordinator of marketing for the Mississippi State University Athletic Department, the south end zone was enriched with the addition of a 48-foot tall, \$6.1 million high-definition video display board in 2008. The video display board included two vertical LED screens on either side for fan engagement

¹¹⁸ Nemeth, *Mississippi State University Football Vault: The History of the Bulldogs*. Coach Jackie Sherrill was the Bulldogs head football coach for 152 games between 1991 and 2003, making him the longest serving coach in Mississippi State University football history. During his thirteen years at the helm of the program, Sherril produced a .500 winning percentage with 75 wins, 75 loses, and two ties.

¹¹⁹ Danny P. Smith, "A Building Project," *The Commercial Dispatch*, August 12, 1999.

¹²⁰ Smith, "A Building Project." See also Baswell, "MSU Announces Stadium Expansion."

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² Don M. Mott, "Mississippi State University Construction Progress Report: January 2000," *Mississippi State University Physical Plant*, 2000, C1.

¹²³ Nemeth, *Mississippi State University Football Vault: The History of the Bulldogs*.

and advertisements. In addition to the main screen and the vertical displays, the board contained a horizontal ribbon screen to provide additional video square footage. With the main display, vertical screens, and horizontal ribbon board, the monstrous video display boasted an impressive 6,896 sq. ft. of display space, and was the largest HD video screen of its kind in the United States.¹²⁴

2013-2014: A New Era for Davis Wade Stadium and Mississippi State University Football

Starting in 2012, a plan for Davis Wade Stadium at Scott Field to undergo its most significant renovation since its inauguration as New Athletic Field in 1914 was set in motion. On March 16, 2012, the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning Board of Trustees accepted the request from the university to expand and renovate the stadium, and the official announcement was made on August 15, 2012.¹²⁵ From a combination of \$68 million in bonds and \$7 million in private donations, the \$75 million expansion and renovation, which included a \$2.5 million contingency fund, was designed by LPK Architecture from Meridian, Mississippi, with world-renowned 360 Architecture from Kansas City, Missouri, acting as a consultant.¹²⁶ After a sealed bidding process, Harrell Contracting Group of Jackson, Mississippi, was awarded the construction contract.¹²⁷ This project provided a variety of new amenities and seating options to the Bulldog fans while increasing the stadium capacity to 61,337.¹²⁸

The construction notably included the addition of twenty-two

¹²⁴ Personal communication, Rhett Hobart, December 4, 2013.

¹²⁵ "Mississippi State Set to Expand and Renovate Davis Wade Stadium," *Mississippi State University Athletics*, 2012, accessed October 16, 2013 from: <http://msubulldogclub.com/reseating/mississippi-state-set-to-expand-and-renovate-davis-wade-stadium/>.

¹²⁶ "Portfolio," 360 Architects, 2014, accessed April 10, 2014 from <http://www.360architects.com>. 360 Architects has designed a variety of contemporary structures including MetLife Field in East Rutherford, New Jersey, and the redevelopment of the Power and Light District in downtown Kansas City, Missouri.

¹²⁷ Browning, "MSU's Davis Wade Stadium Expansion on Schedule," August 11, 2013.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.* The net increase of total seating capacity was 6,255, taking the capacity from 55,082 to 61,337. A new HD video board was placed atop the north end zone expansion. In addition, an entry plaza, new visiting team locker room facility, conference room, banquet catering kitchen, and additional restroom fixtures, concessions, and elevators were included as part of the construction effort. Specifically, the number of elevators was increased from five to twelve, the permanent concession areas increased from 110 to 156, and the number of restroom fixtures increased from 313 to 621.

traditional suites with a total of 288 luxury seats, bringing the total to seventy-two traditional style suites.¹²⁹ The north end of the stadium saw an addition of 236 loge seats, 1,155 Scoreboard Club seats, 7,076 grandstand seats, a dedicated standing room only area, new ADA seating areas, and the addition of a field level club-like facility known as the Gridiron.¹³⁰ In addition, two field level suites (i.e., bunker style) located on either side of the Gridiron Club accommodated thirty guests each, and were made available for single game-by-game rental. According to associate athletic director for facility management and construction at Mississippi State University, Bobby Tomlinson, in total the expansion and renovation used 8,500 cubic tons of poured concrete, 1,200 cubic yards of precast concrete, and 800 tons of steel.¹³¹

Throughout the construction effort, a goal of administrators was to create an environmentally friendly addition. According to Mississippi State University's digital media reporter Bob Carskadon, the expansion was one of the first in the country to use an environmentally friendly type of "green" concrete. Utilizing Portland-Limestone Cement (PLC), the concrete is both high performance and high efficiency by reducing the amount of carbon dioxide needed to produce the product, as well as reducing the total amount of concrete needed to complete a project.¹³² Further improving stadium efficiency, the heating and cooling system was fully integrated into the campus system, rather than remaining a stand-alone unit. According to Jeremiah Dumas, the associate director for the office of sustainability at Mississippi State University, the campus system utilizes heated and cooled piping beneath the ground throughout campus and is far more energy efficient than heating and cooling each individual structure.¹³³

Additional aesthetic and functional changes were made to both the

¹²⁹ Ibid. The twenty-two new traditional suites sold out quickly. Four suites were sold at a price of \$40,000, while the remaining eighteen were sold at \$30,000.

¹³⁰ "Mississippi State Set to Expand and Renovate Davis Wade Stadium," 2012.

¹³¹ Personal Communication, Bobby Tomlinson, September 14, 2013. All newly installed mechanical, lighting, and fixtures are high efficiency.

¹³² Bob Carskadon, "MSU Conceived Concrete Used on Davis Wade Stadium: An Innovation in Industry," *Hail State Beat*, September 6, 2013, accessed January 10, 2014 from: <http://www.hailstatebeat.wordpress.com>.

¹³³ Personal communication, Jeremiah Dumas, September 22, 2013. Dumas predicted that the amount of energy utilized for heating and cooling would significantly decrease by integrating the stadium into the campus system. The system, which uses ground energy and insulation, is controlled remotely.

interior and exterior of the facility. To maintain a consistent look, the façade of the new north end was designed with pre-cast panels inserted into McCool style bricks, which matched the previously finished portions of the facility, as well as many of the surrounding educational buildings. In addition, the center of the north exterior entrance features a large stone surface depicting the state of Mississippi surrounded by engraved stones featuring the name of all eighty-two counties.¹³⁴ On the interior, new poured sidewalks and painted fencing were added surrounding the playing fields. Lastly, the playing field itself, which was shifted in order to center the pitch between the sideline grandstands, was completely replaced with new surface and modern drainage.¹³⁵

Conclusion

The historical evolution of Davis Wade Stadium at Scott Field shows that it has embraced several major expansion and renovation projects following its emergence in 1914 as New Athletic Field.¹³⁶ The combination of reinforced concrete and steel allowed the stadium to seat more spectators than its predecessor in an effort to produce better gate receipts and more effectively meet the demands of the growing popularity of football. The flexibility provided by reinforcing concrete with steel also allowed the facility to move consumer traffic more efficiently through stairs and ramps and helped to organize space between rows, under the bleachers, and throughout the concourses. This change was important because football was maturing at a prodigious rate not only as a competitive athletic activity, but also as a financial engine that helped to provide important revenue. In times of financial difficulties throughout the mid-20th century, institutions often looked to invest in self-supporting structures, and football stadia were often identified as financially sound investments.¹³⁷ Still, like

¹³⁴ Carskadon, "MSU Conceived Concrete Used on Davis Wade Stadium: An Innovation in Industry." The plaza located at the north entrance, also contains personalized bricks with names and messages from all the alumni and members of the fan nation who donated monetarily to the 2013-2014 construction project.

¹³⁵ Personal communication, Bobby Tomlinson, September 14, 2013.

¹³⁶ The 1928, 1935, 1947, 1985, 2000, and 2013 renovations were deemed major renovations/expansions.

¹³⁷ J. G. Taylor, "College Revenue Bonds to Finance Self-Supporting Projects," *Journal of Finance*, 4 (1949): 328-341. In addition to sport stadia, Taylor also identified dormitories, as important self-supporting physical structures.

all early permanent football facilities, Davis Wade Stadium at Scott Field lacked the necessary spectator amenities (e.g., concession stands, sufficient number of restrooms, luxury seating) and technology to present a greater spectacle (e.g., scoreboards, lights, advertisements).

With flexibility and adaptability in mind, the leadership of Mississippi State University modernized Davis Wade Stadium at Scott Field over the years to capitalize on spectator, alumni, and fan interests so that the university could produce one of the truly great spectacles in all of sport. This process was partially motivated by the loss of gate receipts and institutional publicity from the “home” contests that were played in Jackson rather than in Starkville. As the population of the university, as well as the city of Starkville grew, improvements in local infrastructure made hosting the majority of home contests on campus a reality, which was imperative as Mississippi State University attempted to capitalize financially on the popularity of Bulldog and SEC football. Further, gate receipts were the primary source of revenue for early football facilities throughout the United States, so Mississippi State University regularly promoted physical and aesthetic changes to Davis Wade Stadium at Scott Field to expand seating capacity and spectator interest. The university innovatively sought to improve consumer amenities so that better service could be provided to attendees. In this instance, the institution added more concession stands and restrooms but also sought to accommodate fans at night games. The addition of lights in 1985 was recognized as the major innovation to help create this tradition and the spectacle of night football in Starkville. Combined with the highly anticipated match-ups through an association with the SEC, and the folklore of thousands of fans ringing maroon and white cowbells, Davis Wade Stadium at Scott Field is regularly considered one of the most unique and intimidating environments in college athletics.

The multiplication of luxury amenities and communication structures also emerged as a viable source of entertainment for affluent guests and as a source of revenue to help finance construction efforts, which notably used Mississippi construction firms. Specifically, Davis Wade Stadium at Scott Field embraced a variety of luxury boxes and club seating additions throughout the venue, which now serve as

some of the stadium's most noticeable features.¹³⁸ Other technological revolutions that improved the utility of the scoreboard (i.e., now HD video boards) also surfaced to help improve communication and crowd control concerns along with maximizing income opportunities through the interaction that is produced between attendees, event organizers, action on the field, and sponsors. Now, both HD video boards that are housed behind both the north and south end zones contain over 13,000 combined square feet of display space and are dominating physical features of the modern football facility.

This review on the modernization of Davis Wade Stadium at Scott Field showcases how college football evolved into a business that is highly centralized, formalized, and organized in order to address changes in levels of consumerism. New responsibilities emerged in the early years of the stadium that grew into professional fields (e.g., event management, facility management, marketing). Coupled with advances in technology, this specialization of labor in sport management appeared as a result of growing interest to accommodate the preferences of various classes of spectator groups. Customer service options continued to improve for all stakeholder groups (e.g., fans, media, participants) so that space could be beneficial. In essence, space became restricted and increasingly managed so that it could pay for itself. Under the guise of modernization, intercollegiate sport stadiums are larger and cost more to build, renovate, and maintain than their predecessors.

The imposing physical size of the structure combined with its historical and contemporary significance has established Davis Wade Stadium at Scott Field as an important social anchor for Starkville and surrounding northeast Mississippi communities. In addition to serving as a synecdochical image of Starkville and Mississippi State University, the facility has helped the campus community invent important traditions. When filled to capacity, the population ranks as one of the largest "cities" in the State of Mississippi, making it a gathering place for the Bulldog fans. The football contests, game day spectacle, tailgating in the Junction, the Dog Walk, the traditions,

¹³⁸ The addition of various luxury seating options and amenities is most prominent within the expansion and renovation efforts from 2013-2014. Specifically, the institution sought to accommodate a variety of highly identified fans across socio-economic demographics through the myriad seating options and pricing structures.

and being surrounded by friends, family, and fellow Mississippi State University supporters, entices generations of Bulldog supporters to make the pilgrimage to Starkville to absorb the atmosphere. The recent investment strategy of university administrators, athletic administrators, and private donors has secured the future of Davis Wade Stadium at Scott Field as a symbol of modernization.

