HUCKLEBERRY HILL

On the south end of the campus, on 11th Street, we had the problem of Huckleberry Hill. We could look across the trail, which was 11th Street, into the swamp, which was land owned by Mr. John S. Baker. After the War, Don Shotwell and I discussed the need for a new physical education facility and where we could locate it. While we stood together on top of Huckleberry Hill, Mr. Shotwell suggested that if there were some way we could acquire the eleven or twelve acres of swamp across 11th Street, he could move Huckleberry Hill over into the ravine in the swamp and we could make a playing field out of the area where Huckleberry Hill was and locate the fieldhouse on the land across 11th Street.

This started me on a very interesting development of the University. I did considerable research concerning Mr. John S. Baker and his ownership of that area across the 11th Street trail. I found that he had carried it on his books for nearly twenty years as a tax loss and that he had tried to sell it to the Federal Government for a low-rent housing area, such as that developed in the McKinley Hill area called Salishan. (I understand Mr. Dix Rowland, who was then attorney for the College, had some means of blocking the housing unit which Mr. Baker wished to put next to the campus.) I learned that Mr. Baker was in his eighties; that he had had a tax loss for twenty years while carrying this on the books; that it would be an asset of probably $100,000 in his estate if he owned it when he died, and that the University could give him certain monies for it.
I prepared a brief for him, for his tax man, for his attorney, his manager, for the chairman of our Board and for our attorney and for myself, stating that Mr. Baker could take whatever tax loss he could guarantee from his income tax, he could save it as an asset from his estate and thus save considerable inheritance tax; the University would pay him $5,000 in cash for the land, and he would benefit three ways and the University would gain the land.

Mr. Baker came to his office only one hour a week—at 11:00 on Tuesdays, then he had lunch at the Tacoma Club with his colleagues, who all sat at the "Timber Table" in the corner. I called on him at the beginning of his one hour in the office and presented the situation to him. He said, "I don't think it will work. I don't think it will work." I said, "Here's a copy for you," and then gave him copies for each one of his managerial people, and he said he would give it careful consideration and see if it would be feasible for him to do it.

The next week he came in and sat down at lunch beside Mr. Kilworth, who was chairman of our Board, and said to him, "Tell the young man I am interested." Mr. Kilworth got up from the lunch table, went to the phone and called me. When Mr. Baker came back to his office at the end of the lunch period, before going home, I was there. He said, "Young man, I have presented your material to my attorney, my tax man and to the others involved in my management, and they feel it is a good proposition."

We carried out the details of the brief, except that Mr. Baker did not want to sell the land for $5,000. He said he must have $15,000. His agent called me and told me he had to have $15,000 for it but he would contribute
$10,000 toward its purchase, which he did ten days later.

After we had title to the swamp, Mr. Shotwell proceeded to move Huckleberry Hill into the ravine, a task which took considerable time. I remember I left town the day the work started as I was heartbroken to see the rare beauty of Huckleberry Hill, the beautiful dogwood trees and the flowers disappear from the campus in the name of progress!

Mr. Shotwell moved literally hundred of thousands of yards of earth. I am sure his contribution would amount to at least a half million dollars, not only on this project but all through the years. Everytime we needed some work done, for the standpoint of moving earth or one requiring heavy equipment, Mr. Shotwell did it without cost to the University, and he and his wife, Lillian, have been most outstanding alumni and trustees.

Mr. Baker's interest in the College continued and he gave $100,000 for us to name the stadium after him, so we have the John S. Baker Stadium. In the long-range campus plan where every square foot was allocated to be used for the highest educational purposes, it appeared that we needed to locate the Stadium in what was about sixty feet of what would normally be 11th Street if it were paved. We petitioned the City Council for the right to do this and they granted permission to do so. Consequently, if you stand on 11th Street today, you will notice that there is a bend in it which allowed us to build the stadium so that we could have a playing field, a normal size football field in front of the stadium, a track, and areas for practice fields, which are now down by the Women's Gymnasium.

When the John S. Baker Stadium was built, it cost almost $130,000.
Fieldhouse is Built

Mr. Shotwell was chairman of the committee for the design and construction of the fieldhouse. This contract was let out for bids and Roy T. Earley Company was awarded the contract. The design was the best one available at that time. About four or five years later, laminated trusses became available and in a decade after the fieldhouse was built, they became the accepted practice because of the higher degree of flexibility and greater use of space.

The fieldhouse had to be designed for the athletic purposes at that time; and because there was no civic auditorium in the City, it was also designed with the idea that it could be used for that purpose, and it has been used that way for these many years.

There was a City code which required that the seating in the balcony must have an elevation of 18 inches and 24 inches back for the location of seats. When the concrete had been poured for the west side, Don Shotwell and I sat down on the concrete before the seats were installed. He looked down and said, "Franklin, you cannot see four feet of the playing area from this angle. We are locked in by the City code and there is no way we can change it." We discussed it at some length and finally we decided that if we lowered the wall on the east side by 12 inches we could see the entire playing area, so this was done. For this reason, the seats on the east side of the fieldhouse are better seats than those on the west side. When you are in the fieldhouse, you cannot detect it, but it is actually a fact and that is
what happened in the building of the fieldhouse.

The fieldhouse floor was designed with a special kind of fir inlay, crisscrossed to give it somewhat of a springy nature. It was supposed to be ideal for basketball playing. However, the floor was not ventilated properly and there was some dry rot later on because of this feature being built into the floor.

In other matters dealing with the campus, when it became apparent that the College would move from Sixth and Sprague, Mr. Charles Robbins and Professor James Slater went out in the woods and brought in some rhododendron bushes, which are now situated at the southwest corner of the library. The bushes are well over fifty years old and are still beautiful. On three different occasions, I have put a plaque on a concrete base, giving credit to Mr. Robbins and Dr. Slater; but, somehow or other, all the plaques have disappeared.

In discussing the location of the chapel with Mr. W. W. Kilworth, he was eager that it be located on 18th Street and he wanted it set back in the trees with a circular drive in front of it so that people could drive up and park their cars for any service or meeting. However, in the final analysis of the square footage of the campus, it was determined that someday there would need to be an addition to the Everell S. Collins Library; and, for that reason, it was necessary to put the chapel in a limited area facing 18th Street. The idea of the circular drive had to be abandoned. The chapel was located so that there would be adequate space for the addition to Collins Library (which has since been built) and still have adequate space between the front of the chapel and the street.
Dr. Todd wanted to have something from each of the old sites of the campus at the present location. The University had once been located where the present County-City Building is; where McCarver School is now, and at Sixth and Sprague before moving to the present location in 1924. When the gymnasium was built (which is now the Women's gymnasium), Dr. Todd moved the circular window from the downtown building and placed it over the front door. In keeping with this tradition, when the County-City building was demolished, we took the seals which were in the wall, hoping to make a wall of the seals from each one of the locations, but in the process of their aging, they disintegrated and it was impossible to use them.

Burns Baseball Field

The W. B. Burns Baseball Field came to us due to the cultivation of Dr. W. B. Burns, who was an advertising dentist and a pioneer in his field and somewhat of an unusual person in his profession. I often went to see Dr. and Mrs. Burns in the Maxwell Apartments. He had a nephew whom he subsidized and who was also a dentist but who was also a world traveler. He had a Chinese junk which he sailed all over the Pacific. He would practice a few months and then sail the rest of the year; practice a few months again and sail the rest of the year. Dr. Burns had great affection for him and he gave him a considerable amount of money while he was living and through his estate.

I asked Dr. Burns to give us money for the baseball field because he was a professional baseball player in his earlier days. In his estate, he left
enough money to establish the Burns Memorial Baseball Field.

Dr. and Mrs. Burns were lifelong friends of the University and often came to see the baseball team play and on occasion he threw out the first ball at the opening of the season. They used to invite me to their apartment, and I spent a good many Saturday afternoons with him watching baseball games and having him analyze the various plays for me. They were very interesting people and I enjoyed my association with them very much. Naturally, we were very pleased when he made it possible for us to have this splendid baseball facility.

In the process of moving Huckleberry Hill, the baseball field area was elevated about eight to ten feet so there was somewhat of a ravine that went through there. Also, between what is now the music building and Jones Hall, there was a ravine or a swale and we moved about 300 truckloads of dirt to level off that area, which I have affectionately called the Campus Green through the years.

The sewer which goes from the music building down across in front of the Collins Library and over to Anderson Hall must be thirty to forty feet underground in some places because of the fill in which occurred when we leveled off the campus and created the Campus Green.

One day I discovered that we had purchased the campus from fifteen different individuals. The major portion of it had belonged to the YMCA and there was an old YMCA running track and bicycle track in front of what is now Todd Hall. I am told by some people who used it that you can still
see traces of where it was, but it is a little hard for me to discern. An inquiry by the surveyor showed that there were certain gaps and areas which were not an enclosed boundary, and Dr. Banks took the initiative and worked it out so that all the meets and bounds were properly adjusted legally and the titles intact around the campus.

When it was printed in the paper that we were going to build the music building, I received a call from a lady on Fox Island. She said, "I hope you are not going to tear down the old farm house that is there, because it is very precious to me. That's where my two sons were born." The farmhouse stood in the exact spot where the music building is now. It served as an area to teach art; it served as a dormitory; it served as a music building when I came in 1942. It had a big fireplace and one day when I was there I found the fireplace propped up because it had fallen over, away from the wall. It was in very poor condition and made it mandatory that we needed to build a music building at the earliest possible moment.