

2017

Reforged in fire: The Central Building of Iowa State

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Reforged in fire: The Central Building of Iowa State

by

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A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Major: History

Program of Study Committee:
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Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2017

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NOMENCLATURE

Note from major professor regarding the ProQuest upload of *Reforged in fire*: under rules in place when Mr. Kaiser entered the history M.A. program, he was required to write two primary-source historical research papers, neither of which would have been uploaded to ProQuest. Mr. Kaiser accomplished this task, but in an unexpected ruling the graduate college declined to grandfather his original program of study and is requiring that one of his research papers be uploaded in accordance with the new requirements. Mr. Kaiser's M.A. committee has concluded that *Reforged in fire* meets all of the scholarly credentials for upload to ProQuest. For the record, Mr. Kaiser's other research paper examined the history of the Meskwaki tribe in Iowa during the nineteenth century.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my classmates for their thought provoking ideas expressed in class and for the many hours spent researching in the archives together. I would also like to thank my committee for all their guidance and advice.

ABSTRACT

Iowa State University began as a small land grant institution that offered a narrow education in the agricultural and technical fields. The College Building, commonly referred to as Old Main, housed students and provided several classrooms for Iowa State. The structure was the focal point of the campus, and the building symbolized the college's original narrow educational goals and purposes. After the state government amended Iowa's educational code in 1884, the institution gradually began to broaden its curriculum and introduced new courses which triggered a backlash from farmers' organizations. This opposition halted Iowa State's expanding educational goals, but by the turn of the century the institution slowly returned to broadening and diversifying its curriculum outside the agricultural and technical fields. Aside from new coursework and heightened enrollment, the institution also experienced two fires in the early 1900s which destroyed Old Main. From the ashes of Old Main arose the Central Building, which the college built as a replacement. The institution experienced unprecedented growth in enrollment and curriculum, and Iowa State's new Central Building symbolized sweeping changes. *Reforged in fire* explores how the Central Building helped display, facilitate, and make permanent Iowa State's broadening educational goals and embodied the institution's evolving purpose.

SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION

“The time is upon us to start out of the ashes and the wreck of the recent fire the structure of a building more nearly in accord with the needs of the present and the future and more fully in harmony with the purpose of the larger life of the college,” stated Iowa State College (ISC) President William Beardshear. The president’s speech at an emergency Board meeting in 1900 addressed a recent fire that destroyed the College Building, commonly referred to as “Old Main.”¹ Old Main housed students and provided several classrooms for ISC. The structure was the focal point of the campus, and the building symbolized the college’s original narrow educational goals and purpose.² Beardshear saw an opportunity in Old Main’s fire, and envisioned the building’s destruction as ushering in a new era for ISC which emphasized a broad educational approach not solely focused in technical and agricultural studies. The president’s stance was a departure from ISC’s original purpose and his speech came at a pivotal moment in the institution’s history. From the ashes of Old Main arose the Central Building which the college built as a replacement. By the early 1900s the institution experienced unprecedented growth in enrollment and curriculum, and ISC’s new Central Building symbolized the sweeping changes.

This paper argues that the Central Building displayed, facilitated, and made permanent ISC’s broadening educational goals and symbolized the institution’s evolving

¹ Called Session of the Board of Trustees, Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts December 11, 1900, president’s speech, 2-4, 7-11; Beardshear W.M. Reports 1900 2/4 Folder; Papers, 1884-1980 Box 2; William Miller Beardshear Papers Subgroup 5; Presidents Record Group 2 (hereafter cited as RS 2/5); SCISU.

² J. C. Schilletter, *The First 100 Years of Residential Housing at Iowa State University 1868-1968* (Ames, J. C. Schilletter, 1970), 24-27.

purpose. The new structure presented a stylistic departure from previous campus buildings, and embodied a physical reinstatement and continuation of the expanding curriculum trend that began before the backlash of farmer organizations in 1891. The building communicated ISC's broadening educational goals by using a synthesis of classical and modern architecture and by housing the departments and classrooms of History, English, Civics, Mathematics, Public Speaking, Botany, Literature, and Bacteriology. Within the structure professors taught the older studies alongside newer scientific courses. The building served solely for educational and administrative purposes, and it transformed the college grounds by moving student housing away from central campus as well. The Central Building resembled a timeless ancient monument, an architectural and functional statement which symbolized the institution's broadening educational approach and ushered Iowa State into the twentieth century.

SECTION 2. BEGINNINGS

In 1858, the General Assembly of the State of Iowa passed an act which created a state agricultural college and farm. The act appointed trustees and administrators for the college and created guidelines for the institution to follow. Section fifteen described the college's coursework offerings which included natural philosophy, horticulture, botany, chemistry, fruit growing, forestry, animal and vegetable anatomy, geology, mineralogy, meteorology, etymology, zoology, plain mensuration, veterinary arts, levelling, surveying, book keeping and, "such mechanic arts as are directly connected with agriculture." The General Assembly added a concluding provision which allowed for revisions to the curriculum if necessary.³ Future legislation would revise the act.

The institution soon became the Iowa State Agricultural College and Model Farm and followed the 1858 General Assembly curriculum guide in its formative years. By the early 1870s, the campus possessed few buildings. The most prominent structure was Old Main which served as the focal point of the college. The structure's official dedication occurred on March 17, 1869 and enrollment levels slowly increased. Within several years the building expanded and underwent repairs and refinements.⁴ The structure initially utilized a Ruttan hot air heating system, and then transitioned to steam heating in 1876. The building received water from a reservoir powered by a windmill, and attained electricity by 1885.⁵

³ *Authorized Reprint of the Acts and Resolutions Passed at the Regular Session of the Seventh General Assembly Regular Session of the Eighth General Assembly and the Extra Session of the Eighth General Assembly of the State of Iowa* (Des Moines: Robt. Henderson, State Printer, 1914), 118-20.

⁴ H. Summerfield Day, *The Iowa State University Campus and Its Buildings 1859-1979* (Ames: Iowa State University, 1980), 322-23, 327-28, 331-33.

⁵ *The IAC Bomb 1897* (Des Moines: The Geo. A. Miller Printing and Publishing Co., 1896), 18-19.

The building possessed a basement, stood four stories tall, and contained several classrooms and the living quarters for most students.⁶ The structure also housed the campus library, chapel, and museum. Students provided their own toiletries and bedding and used clean straw from a large hay pile at the building's entrance to fill their beds. Student rooms included several chairs, a table, wardrobe, pitcher, a washing basin for bathing and other furnishings. The building's early hot air heating system sufficed for the lower levels, but the higher floors either received a dearth or overabundance of heat. Before the introduction of electric lighting, students utilized a combination of gas from naphtha, kerosene, or candles with varying results. The structure possessed rudimentary plumbing that provided sanitary living conditions when the system functioned.⁷

Students and faculty regarded Old Main as *the* college owing to its significance, history and central location on the campus. Other buildings emerged over the years, but they remained secondary to Old Main's prominence. The structure brought the institution together into a single building where faculty and students lived, socialized, and mingled.⁸ Indeed, Old Main personified and encapsulated the narrow scope and agricultural beginnings of ISC. The building worked well for the institution's early educational goals and purposes by housing students and a few classrooms. Although the building underwent retrofitting and structural expansion, the residential style campus Old Main embodied did not facilitate extended growth in enrollment or curriculum.

⁶ Schilleter, *The First 100 Years of Residential Housing at Iowa State*, 24-25.

⁷ Bette Bonsall, "In 1867, Old Main Served Iowa State College As Library, Chapel, Classroom and Dormitory," *Ames Daily Tribune*, March 21, 1958; Old Main 1865-1983 Folder; News Clippings Office and Laboratory Building-Recycling Center Box 19; Buildings and Grounds Record Series 4; Facilities Planning and Management Subgroup 8; Vice President for Business and Finance Record Group 4 (hereafter cited as RS 4/8/4); University Archives, Special Collections Department, Iowa State University Library (hereafter cited as SCISU).

⁸ John Boyd Hungerford, "Sketches of Iowa State College," (unpublished manuscript, 1941), 1.

Old Main witnessed the formative years of the institution and the passage of several ISC presidents. By 1884 enrollment reached over one hundred students owing to the efforts of President Adonijah S. Welch and Professor Seaman A. Knapp. Welch bolstered the agricultural curriculum until he left ISC in 1883. Professor Knapp created practical agriculture classes and served as president after Welch for four years.⁹

The purpose and educational goals of ISC, land grant schools, and higher education in general became subjected to much interpretation during the last decades of the nineteenth century. The purpose of land-grant schools in particular remained vague and ambiguous. They eventually came to represent a compromise between several approaches to an “industrial” higher education. At the time, there existed two predominant schools of thought for the functions of land grant institutions. The “narrow gauge” approach characterized one route, and proponents of the narrow method stressed the “practical” aspects of training for farmers or mechanics, similar to a trade or vocational school. They sought to cultivate manual dexterity, a mastery of routine skills, physical adaptability and “good moral habitude” in students through productive farm labor and work in mechanical shops. According to historian Earle D. Ross, the followers of the narrow route wanted to, “reduce higher education to the lowest terms and give it the widest extension.” The instruction in these “people’s colleges” would, “be adjusted to the average district school standards.”¹⁰

The other widely followed approach for land grant institutions was the “broad gauge” method. The industrial revolution and the emergence of an “industrial” education augmented the

⁹ Edward A. Goedeken, “An Academic Controversy at Iowa State Agricultural College, 1890-1891,” *The Annals of Iowa* 45, no. 2 (1979): 112-15.

¹⁰ Earle D. Ross, *Democracy’s College: The Land-Grant Movement in the Formative Stage* (Ames: the Iowa State College Press, 1942), 86-97.

scientific fields, and proponents of these studies pressed for a broad understanding of the, “fundamental principles and underlying theories,” of the sciences. A broad “liberal” background in education would prepare students for further specialization. The advocates of the broad approach supported, “adding rather than subtracting the content of higher education,” and sought to produce scientific and industrial leaders, managers and experts, not simply skilled laborers.¹¹ ISC followed the narrow route in its educational purpose and goals during the institution’s formative years. The college only offered courses in the agricultural and technical fields and did not provide a broad, well rounded higher education. ISC’s narrow trend though, would soon experience a transition.

In 1884, Iowa Senator Preston Sutton presented an amendment to the Iowa Educational Code of 1873.¹² The 1873 Code reinstated identical curriculum guidelines as the original 1858 General Assembly Act for ISC and included the same proviso for adjustment.¹³ Sutton desired to act upon the proviso and replace the section pertaining to ISC’s curriculum. He argued that the original 1858 Act inadvertently omitted courses necessary for a well-rounded general education such as Arithmetic, History, Classical Studies, and English. Sutton proposed that the old curriculum guidelines be replaced with, “a broad, liberal, and practical course of study in which the leading branches of learning shall relate to agriculture and the mechanic arts, and which shall also embrace such other branches of learning as will most practically and liberally educate the agricultural and industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions of life.”¹⁴

¹¹ Ross, *Democracy’s College*, 86-89.

¹² “Senator Sutton’s Bill,” *Aurora* 12, no. 1 (1884): 5.

¹³ *The Code: Containing All the Statutes of the State of Iowa, of a General Nature, Passed at the Adjourned Session of the Fourteenth General Assembly* (Des Moines: G.W. Edwards State Printer, 1873), 299-303.

¹⁴ “Senator Sutton’s Bill,”; “Senator Sutton’s Speech in Behalf of the Bill,” both in *Aurora* 12, no. 1 (1884): 5-20.

The senator's amendment became ratified in 1884 and ISC slowly began introducing courses outside the agricultural and technical fields. The college's original purpose was to offer solely agriculture related studies, but the trend slowly began to change. The ratification of Sutton's amendment and the resignation of President Knapp in 1887 led to fewer students participating in agricultural courses at ISC. In 1888, the college combined its Bachelor of Scientific Agriculture Degree into an identical Bachelor of Science Degree presented to non-agriculture students. The institution also combined many agricultural and technical courses. The changes elicited an angry response from Iowa farmers' groups. Under the leadership of the newly elected President William Chamberlain, ISC continued combining agriculture and technical courses the following year. These events further angered farmer organizations.¹⁵

Despite the hostility presented by the farmer groups, President Chamberlain remained unwavering in the decision to combine classes. Chamberlain stated that the, "name 'Agricultural' College is as partial, inadequate, and misleading as would be the terms 'mechanical' or 'military' college." Chamberlain followed the broad educational approach, and expressed that the institution's intent was not to merely teach, "simple processes in agriculture, horticulture, and the mechanic arts...but related science, underlying principles, and processes too intricate or difficult for the unskilled, uneducated laborer." The president attempted to combat prevailing assumptions and clarify ISC's broadening educational goals.¹⁶

By 1890 ISC did not reintroduce stand-alone agriculture courses and the Iowa Farmer's Alliance became involved in the disputes. Farmer groups and the Alliance feared that ISC administrators would completely remove agricultural coursework. The Alliance created a

¹⁵ Goedeken, "An Academic Controversy," 113-14.

¹⁶ *Thirteenth Biennial Report of the Board of Trustees of the Iowa State Agricultural College and Farm Made to the Governor of Iowa, for the Years 1888 and 1889* (Des Moines: G.H. Ragsdale, State Printer, 1889), 7-8.

committee that journeyed to the campus to discuss the curriculum among the institution's staff and Board of Trustees. President Chamberlain resigned amid the disputes, and the Board dealt with replacing him. Discussions between the Trustees and the Alliance committee continued, and the committee recommended that ISC reexamine the offered curriculum and discontinue courses not pertaining to agricultural studies. The Alliance committee also advised the Board to create an agricultural course for the winter season. The Trustees eventually agreed to the creation of the winter class and a stand-alone four-year course in agriculture. The Trustees though did not remove non-agricultural classes. The event halted the broadening curriculum trend of the institution for the time being and displayed how Iowa farm groups, "forced their will upon the college."¹⁷

Shortly after the curriculum controversy, William Beardshear became the next ISC president. A Civil War veteran and former minister, he led a distinguished administrative career at Western College in Toledo, Iowa and at the west district city schools in Des Moines. In 1891, he journeyed to Ames to accept his election as president of ISC. Powerful in stature, Beardshear possessed much charisma, energy and resolve.¹⁸ Like Chamberlain, Beardshear saw the value of a broad higher education. Beardshear's presidency brought stability, and ISC slowly recovered from the numerous presidential resignations and curriculum disputes.

In his first biennial report, Beardshear discussed the numerous repairs given to Old Main, the institution's financial situation, and the increasing student enrollment. The president expressed satisfaction as well as concern at the student increase and listed the number as, "425, being eighty-nine more students than enrolled in any previous year of our college history. This

¹⁷ Goedeken, "An Academic Controversy," 117-18, 120, 122.

¹⁸ "William Miller Beardshear," *The Annals of Iowa* 5, no. 7 (1902): 555-56.

large increase...has added to the demands of all the chairs in the Institution.”¹⁹ Indeed, the next several years witnessed steady campus growth with the addition of Margaret Hall, new cement walks, and the expansion of the sewage lines.²⁰

By 1897 ISC continued to grow and the president expressed wishes to acquire adjacent land for collegiate expansion. Subsequent reports revealed changes to the college’s courses of study and the fiscal year. The president expressed satisfaction at the number of graduates the institution produced and said that the population of Iowa, “is more than ever awakening to the privilege and opportunity of this and kindred colleges throughout the land.”²¹

The next two years brought monumental changes for the institution. The student body, staff, and faculty experienced a united “spirit of study” and ISC began to offer additional years of education in the fields of engineering, the sciences, agriculture and veterinary science. The expansion of the curriculum brought more students which overworked the faculty. Increased enrollment heightened the demand for additional instructors and classrooms. The existing structures on campus, particularly Old Main, barely sufficed as housing or classrooms for the growing numbers of students. By 1899 ISC became departmentalized into four educational divisions consisting of agriculture, science and philosophy, veterinary science, and engineering. The division of science and philosophy alone encompassed seventeen departments. The trend displayed the institution’s slow return to broadening the curriculum outside the agricultural and technical fields. The Trustees also pushed for the renaming of the college. Beardshear concurred

¹⁹ *Fourteenth Biennial Report of the Board of Trustees of the Iowa State Agricultural College and Farm made to the Governor of Iowa, for the Years 1890 and 1891* (Des Moines: G. H. Ragsdale, State Printer, 1891), 7-9, 13.

²⁰ *Sixteenth Biennial Report of the Board of Trustees of the Iowa State Agricultural College and Farm made to the Governor of Iowa, for the Years 1894 and 1895* (Des Moines: F. R. Conaway, State Printer, 1895), 5-6.

²¹ *Seventeenth Biennial Report of the State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts. Made to the Governor of the State for the Years 1896 and 1897* (Des Moines: F. R. Conway, State Printer, 1897), 12-15.

and announced that the institution's name changed from the Iowa State Agricultural College and Model Farm to the Iowa State College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts, or Iowa State College for brevity. The president justified the action by saying that the, "chief purpose is what can be gotten out of these colleges for the good of all the people rather than what we put on them or in them merely in name." Beardshear concluded by stating, "the term Iowa State College is but an honest conviction and expression of fairness to all the departments of the institution."²²

²² *Eighteenth Biennial Report of the Iowa State College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts Including Report of Experiment Station made to the Governor of the State for the Years 1898-99* (Des Moines: F. R. Conway, State Printer, 1899), 6-7, 17-18, 37, 39-40.

SECTION 3. TRAGEDY, OPPORTUNITY, AND SWEEPING CHANGES

Tragedy befell the campus on Saturday, December 8, 1900. In the early hours of the morning fire alarms pierced the darkness along with the ringing of the campus bells. A fire started in the basement of Old Main which spread to the upper levels. Fierce gusts of wind carried the flames to the northern wing, and the blaze quickly spiraled out of control. Citizens of Ames and ISC's volunteer firefighters worked frantically to extinguish the flames. The students living in the structure hastily awoke and salvaged what possessions they could. They evacuated, soaked and shivering in the cold morning, and gathered in front of Old Main to witness the spectacle. The building became consumed by a raging inferno, and the flames reached high into the air which observers could view for miles. The blaze finally abated at 7 am, and those present began to assess the damage. The fire destroyed many books, classroom equipment, and much of the Botany department.²³

President Beardshear, away on administrative errands, learned of the incident later that day. He immediately became concerned, but to his relief a roll call revealed no casualties from the fire. Afterwards, the student body held a meeting to discuss the remaining term. The students enthusiastically supported finishing the semester and in a scene of school spirit gave the college cheer to display their unity.²⁴

Three days later Beardshear and the ISC Board of Trustees gathered for a special meeting. At the beginning of the session, the president thanked the citizens of Ames for

²³ "The Main in Ruins," *Ames Times*, December 13, 1900; Old Main 1865-1983 Folder; News Clippings Office and Laboratory Building Recycling Center Box 19; RS 4/8/4; SCISU.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

graciously providing shelter for students after the fire and addressed the situation of Old Main. He argued against investing additional money into repairing the structure, although ISC could utilize the remains temporarily. According to the president, restoring the building, “would be an unwise expenditure of money and would come far short of meeting the growing demands of the college.” He questioned continuing the residential system Old Main provided and suggested that ISC, “do away with the present form of main building entirely.”²⁵

Beardshear then proposed the creation of a new main building. He stated that, “the time is upon us to start out of the ashes and the wreck of the recent fire the structure of a building more nearly in accord with the needs of the present and the future and more fully in harmony with the purpose of the larger life of the college.” The president planned for the departments of English, Mathematics, Botany, Modern Languages, Ethics, History, Horticulture, Domestic Economy, Literature and lecture rooms to be housed in the structure. The new main building would also offer, “room to continue our growth as an institution,” a function Old Main could not provide. Although the estimated financial loss from the fire cost over \$75,000 and the institution appears to have possessed no insurance, Beardshear intended to transform the disaster into opportunity. The president encouraged the Board to not be dismayed for he envisioned a “new era for the college.”²⁶

After the president’s speech, the Board agreed to create a roof over Old Main to temporarily salvage the undamaged areas. They also agreed to request emergency funding from

²⁵ Called Session of the Board of Trustees, Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts December 11, 1900, president’s speech, 2-4; Beardshear W.M. Reports 1900 2/4 Folder; Papers, 1884-1980 Box 2; William Miller Beardshear Papers Subgroup 5; Presidents Record Group 2 (hereafter cited as RS 2/5); SCISU.

²⁶Ibid., 7-11; Beardshear W.M. Reports 1900 2/4 Folder; Papers, 1884-1980 Box 2; RS 2/5; SCISU.

the state government to provide relief for the departments affected by the fire. The Trustees lastly authorized the Building Committee to hire the State Architect to fully assess Old Main's damages.²⁷

Eight days later, State Architect Henry Liebke surveyed the ruins. In a letter to the Trustees, Liebke judged that the fire originated from the basement boiler room and quickly spread. The architect concurred with Beardshear on the inadvisability of fully repairing the building. The fire wreaked havoc on Old Main's wood construction, and Liebke concluded that the only salvageable portions were the brick walls and southern wing. He recommended the removal of rubble and debris and the renovation of the south wing to serve as temporary housing for students. The architect advised that the repairs, "should be done in an inexpensive manner, for whatever money is thus expended will serve no useful purpose beyond affording needed temporary relief."²⁸

In the following weeks, ISC's administrators struggled to find temporary classrooms and living quarters for students. In a meeting on January 3, the Board continued discussions on a new main building. Beardshear suggested that a building committee be appointed to travel to other institutions, take notes on architecture, and create plans for a fire proof building.²⁹ The Trustees

²⁷ Meeting Minutes December 11, 1900; p. 309-10, 313, *Trustees Minute Book F, July 1898-July 1903*; Board of Trustees/Education Minutes Subgroup 8; State Board of Regents Record Group 1 (hereafter cited as RS 1/8); SCISU.

²⁸ Henry F. Liebke to the Board of Trustees, December 19, 1900; Old Main 1900-1902 Folder Box 2; Building Committee Record Series 10; Committees Subgroup 6; University Councils and Committees Record Group 8 (hereafter cited as RS 8/6/10); SCISU.

²⁹ Called Meeting of the Board of Trustees, January 3, 1901, president's speech, 2-5; Beardshear, W.M. Reports Jan-June 1901 2/6 Folder; Papers, 1884-1980 Box 2; RS 2/5; SCISU.

acted upon Liebebe's advice to temporarily salvage the remnants of Old Main. They chose Henry W. Schlueter, a general contractor from Chicago, to make repairs on Old Main and erect a temporary "Emergency Hall."³⁰

Despite the fire's destruction, ISC persevered and made use of makeshift classrooms and living quarters for students. In the following school year, enrollment reached over one thousand. The ruins of Old Main and the small, unimpressive "Emergency Hall" temporarily served the campus. Beardshear described the makeshift structure as, "of the most ordinary nature, being shiplap without and within with no plastering whatever. It is uncomfortably hot in warm weather, and hard to heat in cold weather." The president voiced the urgent need for a new central building, and stated that due to the increase in students and the expansion of curriculum, "makes it absolutely necessary to devote the new central building wholly to educational purposes." Beardshear felt that the building's construction should take first priority. He described the material expansion of other institutions in Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Kansas, and Michigan and desired ISC to follow suit. Beardshear warned against placing an inadequate structure at the center of campus, because the decision, "would mar both the harmonies and the utilities of things for years and years to come. While nobody was ready for the fire, yet the fire...has made an opportunity of the century for the crowning in a material and educational sense of the college work at Ames."³¹

The president managed to secure an annual \$25,000 appropriation from the state legislature for ISC, which would increase to \$60,000 in the next biennial period. His lobbying

³⁰ Meeting Minutes January 3, 1900; p. 325-26, 331-32, *Trustees Minute Book F, July 1898- July 1903*; RS 1/8; SCISU.

³¹ *Nineteenth Biennial Report of the Iowa State College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts made to the Governor of Iowa for the Years 1900-1901* (Des Moines: B. Murphy, State Printer, 1901), 5-6, 8-11.

provided the institution with a secure source of funding for building expenses for the next several years.³² In the 1901 biennial report Beardshear continued documenting the inadequate amount of classrooms and insufficient room for campus growth. He also noted a massive increase of students attending courses, particularly in the fields of Mathematics, Domestic Science, English, Elocution, History and others.³³ The college's original goal of providing education solely in the agricultural and technical professions slowly transitioned and faded away as the institution's purpose and educational mission expanded. A new central building would provide sufficient space and classrooms for new courses and curriculum. In essence, the new structure would symbolize a departure and transformation from ISC's original purpose, a monument and physical statement to the broadening curriculum and growth of the institution.

Aside from dealing with administration matters, President Beardshear struggled with his personal health. On April 12, 1902, the president became very ill and suffered severe stomach pains. Many students and faculty voiced concerns about his health and assumed that Beardshear's woes resulted from the stress of Old Main's fire and the struggle for state appropriations. The president received medical aid and recovered, but the experience marked the gradual decline of Beardshear's health.³⁴ The episode displayed the concern and sympathy ISC possessed for the president and the pressure his duties placed upon him.

Large steps toward constructing the aptly named "Central Building" began in May 1902. The Board acquired \$35,000 in state appropriations to begin laying the foundation, which they

³² Earle D. Ross, *A History of Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts* (Ames: The Iowa State College Press, 1942), 232.

³³ *Nineteenth Biennial Report of the Iowa State College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts for the Years 1900-1901*, 5-14, 25-28, 30-32.

³⁴ "President Beardshear III," *The I.S.C. Student*, April 16, 1902; Beardshear, W.M Biographical Data n.d. 1884-2009 Folder; Papers, 1884-1980 Box 3; RS 2/5; SCISU.

tentatively planned to do that fall. Beardshear suggested that the Trustees spend the next several months researching the most current procedures of construction and fire proofing methods. The Trustees concurred, and appointed a committee for research.³⁵ In July the Board deliberated on appointing an architect to design the Central Building. One of the candidates they considered was the Des Moines architectural firm of Proudfoot and Bird.³⁶ The firm, led by Willis T. Proudfoot and George W. Bird held a prolific architectural career and focused primarily in educational structures. The firm's buildings received wide acclaim from clients for their aesthetics and utility.³⁷ The Trustees began setting plans in motion, but they still did not agree on architects or a location for the structure.³⁸

The college slowly recovered from the Old Main fire. In the summer, students and faculty anticipated the new school term. ISC though suffered an enormous loss before classes commenced. The last weeks of July and early days of August witnessed President Beardshear's health deteriorate. On August 3, he suffered a massive heart attack which incapacitated him. He lived on for two more days, but passed away in the early hours of August 5, 1902. Multitudes of grief stricken individuals attended his funeral in Ames on August 7. They paid their respects to the fallen president and viewed his beautiful casket arranged among ornate bouquets of flowers and decorative harps. An elaborate ceremony ensued with many prominent individuals delivering

³⁵ Meeting Minutes May 1, 1902; p. 449-50, *Trustees Minute Book F, July 1898- July 1903*; RS 1/8; SCISU.

³⁶ Meeting Minutes July 16, 1902; p. 475-77, *Trustees Minute Book F, July 1898- July 1903*; RS 1/8; SCISU.

³⁷ Patricia Ann Lacey Eckhardt, "Proudfoot and Bird, campus architects: Building facilities for professional education at the University of Iowa, 1898-1910," (master's thesis, the University of Iowa, 1990), 108-9.

³⁸ Meeting Minutes July 16, 1902; p. 475, *Trustees Minute Book F, July 1898- July 1903*; RS 1/8; SCISU.

heartfelt orations. As the sun set, the president's casket descended to its final resting place. Spectators filled his grave with flowers and solemnly departed.³⁹

A week later, a second fire destroyed the remains of Old Main. In the early hours of August 14, the structure became consumed in a firestorm. Alarms rang out, but due to a shortage of water in the building's reservoir tank the blaze proceeded unabated. A small crowd gathered to witness the spectacle, and several ventured into the structure to salvage whatever possible. The students that still lived in the building watched helplessly as their possessions burned.⁴⁰

The dual tragedies stunned ISC. After Beardshear's sudden death, the Board of Trustees elected Professor Edgar Stanton as acting president and momentarily halted plans for the Central Building's construction. The Board struggled to find more classrooms to replace the ones destroyed in Old Main, and agreed to make additions to "Emergency Hall" for the coming school year. They once again hired contractor Henry Schlueter to construct the additional rooms.⁴¹ The fire destroyed the remaining vestiges of Old Main, which conveniently provided a location to place the Central Building. For the next several months the Board of Trustees and Governor Albert Cummins of Iowa discussed ISC's options. Aside from yearly appropriations, the state government allotted the proceeds of a property tax to the college to aid in financing new buildings. The Trustees decided to make the Central Building's completion their main priority because of its symbolism, functions, and location. They agreed upon a budget of \$225,000 for the erection of the structure, although this cost did not include heating, plumbing, furnishings, or

³⁹ "President William Miller Beardshear...A Review of His Life and His Work at the Iowa State College at Ames," *The Cedar Rapids Sunday Republican*, August 10, 1902; Beardshear W.M. Obituaries, Memorials 1902-1906 Folder; Papers, 1884-1980 Box 3; RS 2/5; SCISU.

⁴⁰ "The Burning of the Main," *ISC Student* September 6, 1902; Old Main 1865-1983 Folder; News Clippings Office and Laboratory Building-Recycling Center Box 19; RS 4/8/4; SCISU.

⁴¹ Meeting Minutes August 21, 1902; p. 515-23, *Trustees Minute Book F, July 1898- July 1903*; RS 1/8; SCISU.

electricity. The Trustees agreed on appointing Proudfoot and Bird as architects, and planned to initiate construction once more funds became available the following spring.⁴²

By December 1902, Proudfoot and Bird submitted their initial blueprints to the Trustees.⁴³ The schematics depicted a building with a synthesis of modern and classical styles complete with porticos, pilasters, a dome, and massive columns. The structure took influences from the neoclassical and Greek Revival architectural movements and represented an ambitious, radical departure from previous architecture employed at ISC. Indeed, the building would symbolize and communicate the institution's broadening educational goals with its classically inspired aesthetics and by housing many non-agricultural related departments and classrooms.

The Board approved the designs and also resolved to place their own offices and the offices of the president, treasurer, and secretary in the structure.⁴⁴ The resolution did not include housing for students and the decision marked a radical change in the social landscape of ISC. Students would no longer live on central campus, and the Central Building would serve solely educational and administrative purposes. The structure would expand ISC outward by moving student housing off central campus and into periphery dormitories. Indeed, the structure would be *the* center of campus and would represent the heart of ISC. It would set the tone of the college, a large impressive building for an institution with an ambitious purpose.

In the spring of 1903, the Board arranged for the removal of Old Main's debris and repaired the college roadways and buildings with the salvaged brick and stone. At the end of March, the Trustees opened bidding for the construction of the Central Building.⁴⁵ Henry

⁴² Meeting Minutes November 21, 1902; p. 541-51, *Trustees Minute Book F, July 1898- July 1903*; RS 1/8; SCISU.

⁴³ Meeting Minutes December 31, 1902; p. 563, *Trustees Minute Book F, July 1898- July 1903*; RS 1/8; SCISU.

⁴⁴ Meeting Minutes December 31, 1902; p. 562-63, *Trustees Minute Book F, July 1898- July 1903*; RS 1/8; SCISU.

⁴⁵ Meeting Minutes March 26, 1903; p. 569, 577-78, *Trustees Minute Book F, July 1898- July 1903*; RS 1/8; SCISU.

Schleuter, the same contractor who built Emergency Hall, submitted the lowest bid of \$300,000.⁴⁶ Members of the Board though, still wanted to lower the overall price of construction to \$262,000. After some negotiations, Schleuter agreed to deductions that lowered the price of his services.⁴⁷

On June 11, 1903, the Board made a contract with Schleuter. The contractor furnished a bond of \$75,000, and construction on the Central Building began soon after.⁴⁸ Builders laid the structure's foundation, and by September completed a large portion of the basement.⁴⁹ In the following months Schleuter and the Trustees slightly negotiated the original contract regarding construction materials and payment times.⁵⁰

Albert Storms, a former minister like Beardshear, became the next ISC president.⁵¹ Storms' presidency began at a difficult and turbulent time for ISC, and he became immediately confronted with building and student housing issues. Conditions within Emergency Hall were cramped, noisy, and generally uncomfortable. Funds went to completing the Central Building as soon as they became available, and the Board tentatively scheduled the structure's completion for the fall of 1905. The Trustees decided to omit the proposed dome, attic story, east portico, and western pilasters and pediment, a decision which would save thousands of dollars. President Storms though, detested the modifications and said that they would, "seriously affect the general

⁴⁶ Meeting Minutes May 6, 1903; p. 591-600, *Trustees Minute Book F, July 1898- July 1903*; RS 1/8; SCISU.

⁴⁷ Meeting Minutes May 16, 1903; p. 601-7, *Trustees Minute Book F, July 1898- July 1903*; RS 1/8; SCISU.

⁴⁸ Meeting Minutes June 11, 1903; p. 616, *Trustees Minute Book F, July 1898- July 1903*; RS 1/8; SCISU; *Twentieth Biennial Report of the Iowa State College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts Made to The Governor of Iowa for the Years 1902-1903* (Des Moines: B. Murphy, State Printer, 1903), 91.

⁴⁹ Meeting Minutes September 11, 1903; p. 23-32, *Trustees Minute Book G, July 1903- January 1907*; RS 1/8; SCISU.

⁵⁰ Meeting Minutes November 12, 1903; p. 50; Meeting Minutes December 4, 1903; p. 52-59; both in *Trustees Minute Book G, July 1903- January 1907*; RS 1/8; SCISU.

⁵¹ Ross, *A History of Iowa State College*, 237-43.

appearance, durability, and utility of the proposed building,” and its architectural effect would be, “largely destroyed.” The president further stated that the structure should be, “an enduring testimonial to the educational ideas of Iowa....The very presence of such a building as this, if completed to its original design, will itself be no small factor in the educational influences of this College for the future....This building is to be...queen among the group of buildings upon this spacious campus, for a hundred years to come at least.”⁵² Indeed, the structure would make a statement. The building’s central location on the campus and classical architecture would create a striking visual impression to observers and display ISC’s broadening educational goals.

In ISC’s 1903 biennial report, president Storms stated that the, “primary purpose of a college is to educate....And in a college like ours the technical features receive special attention. But we do not aim to turn out merely herdsmen and mechanics, but educated men who shall bring trained and cultured minds to bear on the industrial problems of the world.” The president and faculty desired to strike a “happy union” between agricultural, technical and general culture courses, and Storms stressed the importance of studying history, literature, mathematics, and the sciences. ISC administrators wanted to provide a well-rounded higher education for students, and the new Central Building’s purpose nicely encapsulated the institution’s broad educational direction.⁵³

The following spring, Schleuter offered to add the omitted attic story, east portico, dome, and the western pilasters and pediment for \$22,000. The Trustees accepted the contractor’s

⁵²*Twentieth Biennial Report of the Iowa State College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts for the Years 1902-1903*, 11-14, 91-92.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 10.

proposition, and hired Proudfoot and Bird to prepare specifications for the plumbing, heating, and electricity for the building.⁵⁴ Once the architects finished their schematics, the Board authorized advertising for bidding on utilities.⁵⁵ After several months, the Trustees settled with the Louis H. Kurtz company of Des Moines, Iowa. The company agreed to provide all labor and material for the ventilation, plumbing, and heating for \$32,800.⁵⁶

Construction continued slowly throughout 1904. In the Spring of 1905, the Board appointed ISC's Mechanical Engineering department to furnish and lay the conduits and electric wiring for the Central Building. The original specifications for the roofing changed from composite to tile, and the Tennessee marble stair treads exchanged for slate on the second and third floors.⁵⁷ The proposed Keene cement changed to scagliola, and the corridor walkways of the ground, second and third levels changed from cement to terrazzo.⁵⁸ Memories of Old Main's fires and Beardshear's advice remained vivid in the minds of the Trustees, and they thoroughly fireproofed the Central Building using granite, cement, and other nonflammable materials. Although construction materials changed for financial reasons, the visual impression of the structure remained unaltered.

⁵⁴ Meeting Minutes April 21, 1904; p. 72, 77-78, *Trustees Minute Book G, July 1903- January 1907*; RS 1/8; SCISU.

⁵⁵ Meeting Minutes June 16, 1904; p. 106; Meeting Minutes July 13, 1904; p. 110; both in *Trustees Minute Book G, July 1903- January 1907*; RS 1/8; SCISU.

⁵⁶ Meeting Minutes September 7, 1904; p. 139-43, *Trustees Minute Book G, July 1903-January 1907*; RS 1/8; SCISU.

⁵⁷ Meeting Minutes April 19, 1905; p. 262-63, *Trustees Minute Book G, July 1903-January 1907*; RS 1/8; SCISU.

⁵⁸ Meeting Minutes June 7, 1905; p. 298-302, *Trustees Minute Book G, July 1903-January 1907*; RS 1/8; SCISU.

SECTION 4. THE CENTRAL BUILDING

President Storms, Governor Cummins, and Dean Edgar Stanton laid the building's cornerstone at ISC's 1905 Harvest Home Festival.⁵⁹ President Storms described the structure's progress that year in his biennial report. The state appropriations and property tax fund accounted for most of the construction costs, and the finished building was to be, "one of the most substantial and noble educational buildings....With granite base, fireproof construction, walls of Bedford stone and interior finish to correspond, it is built to stand for centuries, a worthy monument to the faith, hope, enterprise and high educational ideals of a great state."⁶⁰ The Central Building's stone, granite, and fireproof qualities contrasted with Old Main's wooden composition. Old Main did not last, which represented the initial goals and purpose of ISC. The Central Building would never decompose or burn down, it would "stand for centuries," and usher in a new era for ISC. The new departments and classrooms inside the "permanent" building also displayed the "permanent" decision to expand ISC's curriculum. The decision revealed the institution's broadening educational direction.

Schleuter finished a majority of construction by early 1906.⁶¹ Work on ornamentation, decorations, exterior columns and lighting though, still required detailed attention which would take several more months to finish.⁶² The Central Building's completion ended ISC's five-year use of Emergency Hall. President Storms expressed relief at the end of Emergency Hall's use,

⁵⁹ "New Central Hall," *Alumnus* 1, no. 8 (1906): 159.

⁶⁰ *Twenty-First Biennial Report of the Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts made to the Governor of Iowa for the Biennial Period July 1, 1903 to June 30, 1905* (Des Moines: B. Murphy, State Printer, 1906), 18.

⁶¹ *Twenty-Second Report of the Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts made to the Governor of Iowa for the Period July 1, 1905, to June 30, 1906* (Des Moines: Emory H. English, State Printer, 1907), 22-23.

⁶² "Central Building Now Occupied," *ISC Student* March 3, 1906; Iowa State Daily 1/25/1905-12/21/1908 Microfilm Box 3c Call Number CQ; Microfilm Collection, Iowa State Media Center.

describing the structure as, “a shed scarcely fit for sheep.” The Central Building’s final construction cost with added fixtures and furnishings amounted to \$415,502.84, and the president boasted that the costs were, “less by hundreds of thousands of dollars than a number of other college buildings in the country, but superior to most if not all of them in its harmony, dignity, adaptation to its purpose and substantial character.”⁶³

The dedication of the Central Building occurred in June 1906.⁶⁴ The guests at the ceremony undoubtedly stood in awe at the colossal structure. The building’s architecture contained many classical inspirations from primarily Greek designs. The eastern exterior of the structure possessed a large staircase which ascended to the first floor. At the top of the staircase stood four massive fluted Corinthian columns and two pilasters that supported a large ornately decorated portico and pediment with an elaborate tympanum. The northern and southern exteriors contained a combination of Ionian and Doric pilasters and pediments. The western exterior mirrored the eastern with Corinthian pilasters supporting a decorated pediment. An impressive dome topped the structure.⁶⁵

The interior composition consisted solely of fireproof materials aside from the wooden furniture. Indeed, ISC’s *Alumnus* publication described the building as, “a triumph of architecture.” The large columns in the corridors combined with terrazzo flooring and the marble

⁶³ *Twenty-Third Biennial Report of the Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts made to the Governor of Iowa for the Biennial Period, July 1, 1906 to June 30, 1908* (Des Moines: Emory H. English, State Printer, 1908), 108-9, 254.

⁶⁴ Ross, *A History of Iowa State College*, 244.

⁶⁵ Architectural Drawing Sheet 8 (Artist Proudfoot and Bird); “East Front Elevation,” c.a. 1905; Architectural Drawing Sheet 9 (Artist Proudfoot and Bird); “West Elevation,” c.a. 1905; Architectural Drawing Sheet 14 (Artist Proudfoot and Bird); “One-Half Inch Scale Drawing of East Central Pavilion,” c.a. 1905; Architectural Drawing Sheet 17 (Artist Proudfoot and Bird); “One-Half Inch Scale Drawing of North and South Center Pavilions,” c.a. 1905; Architectural Drawing Sheet 10 (Artist Proudfoot and Bird); “South Elevation,” c.a. 1905; all in Beardshear Hall Oversized Materials “Map Case” 1904-1988 Folder; RS 4/8/4; SCISU.

stairways furnished in modern ornamental steel gave the interior, “a stately and most artistic effect.” The *Alumnus* lauded the harmonious union of classrooms, laboratories and administrative offices.⁶⁶

The *ISC Student* newspaper described the Central Building’s massive floor space. The paper stated that the structure was, “designed in the classic renaissance style with a strong Grecian feeling running through the detail of its exterior.” The executive offices contained ornamental stucco cornices, and the large scagliola columns in the corridors were, “so good an imitation of marble that experts are deceived.” The ground floor contained many Doric columns along with the English department’s eighteen rooms. The first floor possessed administrative offices and the German, French, and Civics departments. It also had a rotunda surrounded by Ionian columns which created a breathtaking atrium and a spacious area for student registration work. The first floor connected to the grand staircase on the eastern exterior of the building, and the second floor contained the departments of Mathematics, History, and Economics. The third floor and attic possessed the Botany and Bacteriology departments with many display cases, plant exhibits and laboratories.⁶⁷ Stained glass skylights provided interior lighting for the structure’s open areas. The first floor had a mosaic tile border floor design, and the rotunda achieved lighting through an opening in the center of the dome. Incandescent globe style lamps gave artificial lighting to the rest of the building.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ “Commencement Week,” *Alumnus* 1, no. 8 (1906): 154; “New Central Hall,” *Alumnus* 1, no. 8 (1906): 160.

⁶⁷ “Central Building Now Occupied,” *ISC Student* March 3, 1906; Iowa State Daily 1/25/1905-12/21/1908 Microfilm Box 3c Call Number CQ; Microfilm Collection, Iowa State Media Center.

⁶⁸ Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck Architecture, “Atrium Restoration Study for Beardshear Hall Iowa State University; Ames, Iowa,” (unpublished manuscript, July 1987), 2; Beardshear Hall 1903-1905 Folder; News Clippings Atanasoff Hall- Camp Dodge Annex Box 3; RS 4/8/4; SCISU.

The Mechanical Engineering Department laid the electrical wiring and conduit. The plumbing, heating, and ventilation systems that Proudfoot and Bird designed spanned throughout the structure. Every floor aside from the attic possessed either a restroom or a lavatory. Students and faculty could now rely on dependable plumbing and sewage systems and no longer had to travel far to use a restroom, a stark contrast to Old Main. Proudfoot and Bird used a combination of steam piping and fan coil units for heat and air flow. The architects also included registers and diffusers for air circulation and ventilation in all rooms on every floor except the attic which utilized ventilation through the building's roof.⁶⁹ Indeed, the structure created a synthesis of modern utility systems and classical architecture, a harmony of the old and new. The interior and exterior designs, reminiscent of a timeless ancient monument, symbolized and displayed ISC's broadening educational goals.

ISC immediately began classes in the Central Building following the structure's completion.⁷⁰ Students felt pride for the new building, but noted changes that the passage of Old Main brought. The original residential campus would slowly shift to a dormitory style, and students observed the transition with mixed emotion. According to the *Alumnus*, the Central Building in part restored several aspects of campus life Old Main offered. The new structure brought back the massing of students and their close association with professors. The contrasts

⁶⁹ Floorplan (Artist Proudfoot and Bird); "Plan of Steam Pipes," c.a. 1904; Floorplan Sheet 1A (Artist Proudfoot and Bird); "Plan of the Plumbing, Heating and Ventilation- Foundation Plan," c.a. 1904; Floorplan Sheet 2A (Artist Proudfoot and Bird); "Plan of the Plumbing, Heating and Ventilation- Ground Floor Plan," c.a. 1904; Floorplan Sheet 3A (Artist Proudfoot and Bird); "Plan of the Plumbing, Heating and Ventilation- First Floor Plan," c.a. 1904; Floorplan Sheet 4A (Artist Proudfoot and Bird); "Plan of the Plumbing, Heating and Ventilation- Second Floor Plan," c.a. 1904; Floorplan Sheet 5A (Artist Proudfoot and Bird); "Plan of the Plumbing, Heating and Ventilation- Third Floor Plan," c.a. 1904; Floorplan Sheet 6A (Artist Proudfoot and Bird); "Plan of the Plumbing, Heating and Ventilation- Attic Floor Plan," c.a. 1904; all in Beardshear Hall Oversized Materials "Map Case" 1904-1988 Folder; RS 4/8/4; SCISU.

⁷⁰ "Central Building Now Occupied," *ISC Student* March 3, 1906; Iowa State Daily 1/25/1905-12/21/1908 Microfilm Box 3c Call Number CQ; Microfilm Collection, Iowa State Media Center.

between the buildings though, presented, “wide differences that cannot be bridged. The intellectual and formal social life may show a close resemblance, but the intimate home life that the students...enjoyed, when all ate, slept, studied, rested, recited, sang and worshipped under one roof has passed away.”⁷¹ The Central Building’s exclusive functions of administrative and educational work ended student housing on central campus and transformed the social landscape of ISC. Although the Central Building ended one era of ISC, the structure facilitated continued growth and ushered the institution into the twentieth century.

The changed conditions on central campus slowly created a distance between students, faculty, and the administration. Students though, still desired to leave their mark and memories on the Central Building. In 1907, the graduating class of 1905 presented a marble drinking fountain on the first floor of the structure. The simple marble fountain contained profound meaning. At the dedication ceremony, one of the speakers stated, “a block of marble...it knows no distinctions. Rich and poor, wise and foolish, black and white are all equal. It knows no rank, no caste, no creed. It will cheerfully and faithfully perform its duties to all classes of society. It teaches us unselfishness, faithful performance of duty, democracy.” The message personified the fountain, the building, and the college’s expanding goals. ISC now offered a broad higher education to all and sought to create cultivated well rounded citizens. ISC would produce critical thinkers who would share their knowledge, “like the fountain...freely and cheerfully to everyone,” and give back, “the best...to the community, to the state, to the nation.”⁷²

⁷¹ “The ‘Old’ Main and the ‘New’ Central,” *Alumnus* 2, no. 1 (1906): 8.

⁷² “Presentation of ‘05 Drinking Fountain,” *Alumnus* 3, no. 2 (1907): 34-36.

SECTION 5. A NEW ERA

By 1908, ISC offered thirteen different degrees, and the Twenty Third Biennial Report displayed the institution's broadening educational agenda. The departments of Mathematics and English alone reported over 900 students enrolled in coursework. The institution contained 1,848 students, many more than a decade prior. ISC's alarming growth necessitated additional faculty, and President Storms called for associate professors. The fields of Bacteriology, Chemistry and other sciences expanded rapidly as well. The president continued to endorse a well-rounded higher education that included English, Economics, History, Politics, and Foreign Languages.⁷³

By 1913, the Trustees moved the college library into the Central Building because of the structure's fireproof qualities.⁷⁴ Indeed, the Central Building's size and many classrooms facilitated the expanse of ISC's enrollment and broadening curriculum. Ironically, the growth the building facilitated slowly began to expand beyond the structure's capacity, and enrollment increases forced the Board to relocate the department of Bacteriology.⁷⁵

The United States' involvement in the First World War strained the Federal Government's funding of ISC, and student attendance substantially decreased because of the conflict. The government implemented the military draft and announced at the beginning of the 1918 school year that, "all students of draft age...capable of measuring up to college entrance requirements, it being the intention that they should be trained for war while pursuing their studies and that such students, on induction, should be under military control...entitled to the pay

⁷³ *Twenty-Third Biennial Report of the Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts for the Biennial Period, July 1, 1906 to June 30, 1908*, 6-8, 12-15, 20, 22.

⁷⁴ Meeting Minutes August 19, 1913; p. 398-402, *Trustees Minute Book I, July 1911- June 1914*; RS 1/8; SCISU.

⁷⁵ *Third Biennial Report of the Iowa State Board of Education to the Governor and the Thirty-Sixth General Assembly for the Biennial Period Ending June 30, 1914* (Des Moines: Robert Henderson, State Printer, 1914), 286.

of a soldier just as men undergoing a training process.” After the announcement, the enrollment situation reversed. Many young men took advantage of the opportunity to, “get at least a few months of college training.” A large student army emerged, but the government refrained from paying for the maintenance and training of the men until they were inducted into service. ISC’s finances became strained, and additional state funding assisted the institution.⁷⁶

Hostilities in Europe ceased in November 1918. After the Armistice, college administrators anticipated increased enrollment because the war, “had demonstrated...the advantage held by him who had been trained in thought and action. Never before had the value of systematic training been so strikingly brought to public attention, and it followed...that the advantages offered by modern institutions of learning would be more eagerly sought.” Indeed, by November 1920 ISC reported 4,482 students, an increase of over 900 since the fall of 1918.⁷⁷

By 1925 enrollment continued to increase for ISC.⁷⁸ The institution provided degrees in over twenty-five fields including such professions as Economics, History, Sociology, Industrial Science, Home Economics, Mathematics, Physics, and Technical Journalism. The campus expanded to encompass sixty buildings spanning over 1,904 acres.⁷⁹ The Trustees removed the college library from the Central Building and into the newly constructed Parks Library the same year. Student attendance increased to such an extent that by 1928 the Botany department outgrew

⁷⁶ *Fifth Biennial Report of the Iowa State Board of Education for the Biennial Period Ending June 30, 1918* (Des Moines: The State of Iowa, 1918), 7-9, 123-24.

⁷⁷ *Sixth Biennial Report of the Iowa State Board of Education for the Biennial Period Ending June 30, 1920* (Des Moines: The State of Iowa, 1920), 7-8.

⁷⁸ *Ninth Biennial Report of the Iowa State Board of Education for the Biennial Period Ending June 30, 1926* (Des Moines: The State of Iowa, 1926), 5-6.

⁷⁹ *Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts Official Publication General Catalogue 1925-1926, Vol. 23* (Ames: The Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, 1925), 3-5, 308.

the Central Building and relocated to Botany Hall.⁸⁰ The Central Building remained largely unaltered in appearance from its creation aside from roof repairs and the remodeling and rearrangement of interior offices.⁸¹ The structure's plumbing, sewage, ventilation, and heating systems remained unchanged with the exception of the electric wiring which the Trustees replaced in 1934.⁸² Although the building remained the same, ISC changed dramatically. Within fifteen years of the Central Building's construction ISC grew tremendously and hardly resembled the small land grant institution that began with Old Main. The Central Building helped facilitate ISC's broadening ambitions.

By the 1930s the Central Building housed the administrative offices for ISC and the departments of Modern Languages, History, Government, Psychology, Mathematics, Speech, and English.⁸³ Students and faculty began to associate the Central Building with President Beardshear's administration. Beardshear's presidency marked a transition in purpose and a turning point in growth at ISC both in curriculum and enrollment. Since the early twentieth century, ISC vastly broadened its coursework and programs. The Central Building neatly encapsulated ISC's transformation and new broad educational approach to higher learning. At a meeting on June 14, 1938 President Charles Friley recommended that the Central Building be renamed Beardshear Hall.⁸⁴ Later that summer, the class of 1898 presented to ISC an oil portrait of President Beardshear at a ceremony in the Memorial Union. President Friley accepted the

⁸⁰ Meeting Minutes April 17-18, 1925; p. 463, 469, *Trustees Minute Book L June 1922-July 1925*; RS 1/8; SCISU; Meeting Minutes August 17, 1928; p. 453, *Trustees Minute Book M July 1925-April 1929*; RS 1/8; SCISU.

⁸¹ Meeting Minutes April 15, 1925; p. 463; Meeting Minutes April 16, 1925; p. 465; both in *Trustees Minute Book L June 1922-July 1925*; RS 1/8; SCISU.

⁸² Meeting Minutes July 10, 1934; p. 505-6, *Trustees Minute Book O May 1932-August 1934*; RS 1/8; SCISU.

⁸³ "Central Will be Beardshear Hall Hereafter," *Ames Tribune* June 13, 1938; Beardshear Hall 1904-2008, n.d. Folder; News Clippings Atanasoff Hall- Camp Dodge Annex Box 3; RS 4/8/4; SCISU.

⁸⁴ Meeting Minutes June 14, 1938; p. 75 first set, *Iowa State Board of Regents Minute Book 1937-1939*; RS 1/8; SCISU.

portrait on behalf of the college, and formally announced the renaming of the Central Building to Beardshear Hall.⁸⁵

Beardshear Hall continued to house both classrooms and administrative offices for the next five decades. In 1959 ISC's name changed to the Iowa State University of Science and Technology to reflect that, "the institution, in its programs in education and research in the various sciences, had fully attained the scope and function of a university during the first 100 years of its being."⁸⁶ The State Board of Regents stated that the name change, "more accurately describes both its form and its function, and brings its terminology into line with other similar institutions." In 1959 the university contained six educational divisions which consisted of Agriculture, Engineering, Home Economics, Sciences and Humanities, Veterinary Medicine and a Graduate College.⁸⁷ The transition to a university prompted a revised inscription on Beardshear Hall's main entrance to display the new name of Iowa State University.⁸⁸

Beardshear Hall received air conditioning when it became connected to the university's central chilled water system in the 1970s.⁸⁹ Aside from adding air conditioning, the structure remained essentially the same in form and function. Iowa State though, continued to change and redefine itself through the decades. By 1973 the university's course offerings expanded to the point that the fields of the humanities and the sciences contained the most students. Iowa State's

⁸⁵ "In Memoriam to William Miller Beardshear," *The Alumnus of Iowa State* 34, no. 1 (1938): 5.

⁸⁶ *Iowa State University of Science and Technology General Catalog: Announcements and Faculty List 1959-1961* (Ames, Iowa State University of Science and Technology, 1959), 9.

⁸⁷ *Report of the State Board of Regents for the Biennial Period Ending June 30, 1960 Twenty-Sixth Biennial Report* (Des Moines: The State of Iowa, 1960), 97.

⁸⁸ Day, *The Iowa State University Campus*, 174.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

broad based curriculum allowed students to, “specialize in excellent programs of science and technology, and to acquire a broad general background of education in the ‘liberal arts’ tradition.”⁹⁰

By the early 1980s the last of the classrooms left Beardshear Hall, and the building became devoted to administrative functions.⁹¹ The expansion in enrollment and curriculum the structure symbolized and facilitated had surpassed the building’s capacities. The growth became so great that an ever-widening distance between the administration, faculty and students emerged. Students increasingly began to associate the hall with, “long lines and bureaucratic red tape.” The hall represented the imposing throne of the institution’s governing bodies and became the location where students assembled to voice their opinions or oppose university regulations. A memorable incident occurred on the eve of Halloween in 1985. In the early hours of the morning, students placed a toilet on the eastern staircase of the hall. A banner displayed above the toilet read, “Here’s Your Chance Seniors. Go For It!”⁹² Indeed, Beardshear Hall became a place where students vented frustrations for the institution.

The closeness and familiarity that Old Main provided had long disappeared. The university’s governing bodies decided to change the situation with Beardshear Hall, and in the late 1980s began to plan an extensive remodel of the structure’s interior. The decades of use brought clutter from administrative paperwork, bulletin boards and tables to the atrium and open spaces of the building. Dark colored skylight windows diminished much of the natural lighting

⁹⁰ *Iowa State University of Science and Technology General Catalog 1973-1975 vol. 71* (Ames, Iowa State University of Science and Technology, 1973), 45.

⁹¹ Blunck Architecture, “Atrium Restoration Study for Beardshear Hall,” 2; Beardshear Hall 1903-1905 Folder; News Clippings Atanasoff Hall- Camp Dodge Annex Box 3; RS 4/8/4; SCISU.

⁹² Paula Yost, “Halloween Prank Flushed,” *Iowa State Daily* October 31, 1985; Beardshear Hall 1904-2008, n.d. Folder; News Clippings Atanasoff Hall- Camp Dodge Annex Box 3; RS 4/8/4; SCISU.

sources. The remodel intended to create student service areas on the ground floor and, “restore the public spaces to their original appearance.”⁹³ The university wanted to reestablish connections and bridge the distance between the administration, faculty, and students.

In the 1990s, the ambitious remodeling projects acquired \$5.7 million in funding and initiated in the early 2000s. The renovations placed the offices of financial aid, registrar, university card services, accounts receivable, and career planning along with a student help desk on the ground floor to make the hall more student oriented and accessible. Other office rearrangements occurred on the second and third floors.⁹⁴ The structure also became more handicapped accessible with the addition of a new elevator. An additional \$1.9 million went toward replacing the building’s windows, interior paint, and first floor lighting. The remodel also introduced public computers with internet accessible capabilities. The exterior of Beardshear Hall remained the same aside from replacing the heavily worn eastern staircase. The remodeled stairs contained reinforced concrete supports, new stone steps and handrails for added safety.⁹⁵

Beardshear Hall no longer contains classrooms or performs many of its original functions, but the structure still communicates the institution’s broad educational agenda in its history and architecture. Beardshear Hall shaped the university by displaying, facilitating, and making permanent Iowa State’s broadening educational goals by using a synthesis of classical and modern architecture and by initially housing the departments and classrooms of History,

⁹³ Blunck Architecture, “Atrium Restoration Study for Beardshear Hall,” 3; Beardshear Hall 1903-1905 Folder; News Clippings Atanasoff Hall- Camp Dodge Annex Box 3; RS 4/8/4; SCISU.

⁹⁴ Amie Van Overmeer, “Renovation begins inside Beardshear,” *Iowa State Daily* August 28, 2000; Beardshear Hall 1904-2008, n.d. Folder; News Clippings Atanasoff Hall- Camp Dodge Annex Box 3; RS 4/8/4; SCISU.

⁹⁵ Cavan Reagan and Leah Patton, “Beardshear gets three-phase facelift,” *Iowa State Daily* June 19, 2001; Beardshear Hall 1904-2008, n.d. Folder; News Clippings Atanasoff Hall- Camp Dodge Annex Box 3; RS 4/8/4; SCISU.

English, Civics, Mathematics, Public Speaking, Botany, Literature, and Bacteriology. Beardshear Hall is a monument to a well- rounded higher education, an architectural and functional statement that continues to serve Iowa State.

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