

The gridiron

Our evolving stadium — and KU Endowment — got their start in 1891, when KU students were clamoring for an athletics field. Former Kansas governor Charles Robinson and alumnus John McCook of New York were ready to help with land and cash for the field. To accept their gifts, 13 alumni and friends formed KU Endowment as a private organization. Had the donations been made directly to KU, they could have gone into state coffers: and no athletics field.

McCook Field's wooden bleachers saw rough-and-tumble battles until 1921. The bleachers were razed in one day to make way for the new stadium, built as part of a \$1 million drive to fund it and Kansas Union as World War I memorials.

Through the years, donors have helped expand the stadium, making it better for football, the KU Relays, graduation and other events. Most recently, gifts from the Anderson and



McCook Field in 1891.

KU ARCHIVES

Kivisto alumni families, along with many other donors, added a new home for the Orange Bowl-winning football program, including offices, training facilities, practice fields and more at the sides of the Hill.

Eventually, the McCook Field land was given to the state, after all: to KU, that is. In 1987, KU Endowment

transferred the last remnant of the site — a parking area east of Memorial Stadium — to the university.

— Kirsten Bosnak

See more stadium photos, from its beginnings to today, at kuendowment.org/stadium/.



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