

# OLD SHEEP BARN



Fig. 1. The sheep barn  
c. 1920. [series 9/3,  
Sheep Stalls, jf-40]

*The date and circumstance of the construction of the sheep barn has not been determined. Its later years were spent as a makeshift dormitory for short course students. It was demolished in 1952.*

Almost nothing is known of the early history of this building. No mention of it before 1911 has been found. In his 1911 report to the regents Agriculture Dean Russell says: "Last year the front section of the sheep barn, which was one of the oldest structures on the farm, was rebuilt."<sup>1</sup> This rebuilding was designed by the office of supervising architect Arthur Peabody, who in the fall of 1911 had contractor C. B. Fritz jack up the roof and insert additional framing to add space for storage of fodder, and for the animals. No more is found regarding the sheep barn until the 1930s.

In 1930 due to the constant and rapid rise in enrollment in the agricultural short courses, which were attended by state farm boys during the winter months, agriculture dean Christenson began to agitate for dormitories for the short course students, which would make attendance at the short courses easier and a more integrated part of the university. First in 1932, a WWI Student Army Training Corps (SATC) wooden dormitory that had been moved from Camp Randall for use by the Forest Products Lab was moved again and remodelled for use as a short course dorm. Two years later in 1934, the university remodelled the sheep barn as another dormitory and named it Kleinheinz Hall in honor of Frank Kleinheinz, a recently deceased member of the agriculture staff who had begun as a shepherd and became known as a world authority on sheep breeding.<sup>2</sup> The sheep barn lived the rest of its life as a short course dormitory. It was not a dignified one. Historian Glover reports that "Wartime found the faculty embarrassed by the problem of persuading students that such quarters



Fig. 2. The sheep barn in 1935, with the stock pavilion in the background. [series 13/12, Voss Collection]

were to be dignified by gracious department."<sup>3</sup> Indeed in 1942 due to the fire danger in the very old wooden buildings, they were condemned. This had the result of restricting the enrollment (370 just before WWII) in the short courses, exactly what dean Christenson had feared.

In 1947 the university petitioned the state legislature for funding for short course dorms. This financing was not immediately forthcoming, and in the absence of any alternative, students continued to be housed in the old condemned buildings. Extra students had to find housing in town, and since short course students did not arrive in Madison until November, city housing was often very hard to find.

Even after the new short course dorms were funded and built in 1949, Kleinheiz Hall continued to be used as housing for overflow short course enrollment. It was widely recognized that this was a bad idea since its susceptibility to fire was obvious. But the money for the new dorms was sufficient for only 230 students and there was space nowhere else. Then on March 11, 1950 a small fire broke out in Kleinheiz, in the room of two men who were not there at the time. Other lodgers doused the blaze, and prevented it from spreading to the rest of the building.<sup>4</sup> It was a near miss. For two years the old barn was used as miscellaneous storage. And in 1952 when the Dairy Cattle Center was built on that site the old sheep barn was demolished.

1) *Regent's Report*, 1911-1912 p. 120.

2) *The Wisconsin Magazine*, March, 1929, p. 13.

3) *Farm and College*, Glover, p. 267.

4) *Daily Cardinal*, March 11, 1950 p. 1.