

# SEED BUILDING



Fig. 1. The agronomy seed building south face. [Series 9/3, Seed Storage Building, jf-60]

In the late 1930s, the agronomy department of the university under Ransom A. Moore was raising all the hybrid seed corn in the state, as well as doing experimentation to produce better hybrids in all important Wisconsin farm crops. The storage facilities for the seed produced by this department was woefully inadequate. Storage in buildings scattered around the campus, the outlying experimental farm, and rented space in Madison, made careful supervision and efficient retrieval impossible. Finally in 1939 the state legislature approved an appropriation of \$25,000 for a seed storage building. The department began to plan the new building.

In order to keep cost to a minimum, the state architect Arthur Peabody and agronomy professor Norman P. Peal decided to build a structure across the south ends of two 70 foot long existing metal storage sheds (probably the main seed storage facilities), while adding a third metal shed to the row. This produced a building shaped like an 'E' with the three sheds pointing north from the Linden Drive front. This front section was a plain one story brick building 175 feet by 48 feet without a basement, with a flat concrete roof, and large glass brick windows (see Fig. 1). The building was power ventilated and temperature controlled for best seed storage condition. A plan to add a second story to the building was never carried out.<sup>1</sup>

Bids were called for on May 24, 1940. The regents approved the plans and estimates on May 27, 1940. The \$25,000 appropriation was supplemented by income from university dairy sales to bring the total to \$26,325. The next day contracts were signed with George Nelson & Son of Madison for \$19,900 for general construction. Utilities and grading subcontracts accounted for the balance of the cost. The general contract called for completion by August 31, 1940. The building was ready for use by October 1940. The metal shed sections were expanded 10 feet each in June 1953 by Trachte Brothers Construction Company at a cost of \$3779.<sup>2</sup>

1) Daily Cardinal, October 20, 1940.

2) Executive Committee Minutes, May 27, 1940, plans in records of department of planning and construction.