

Photos by Robin Clark

Carmichael renovation will add 900 seats

There will now be more seats in Blue Heaven for Tar Heel basketball fans. Work began last week to replace the permanent seats in Carmichael Auditorium with bleacher-type seats with an increased capacity of 900 persons.

"It was a critical situation with the number of seats in Carmichael Auditorium," Moyer Smith, assistant athletic director of business, said in an interview last spring of the decision to replace 6,617 permanent seats with contour aluminum, back-supported seats, similar to those in the upper deck of the south side of Kenan Stadium.

Carmichael holds 8,200 people and has faced a demand for twice that number of tickets to most home basketball games since its construction in 1965.

"There was a need for immediate relief for both the students and the members of the Educational Foundation who contribute to make scholarships available," Smith said.

The additional 900 seats will increase the capacity of Carmichael to a "legitimate 9,100", "according to Smith, with a two-inch reduction of space per seat accounting for the difference.

"It doesn't seem like that much but the result is you pick up about two seats per row," Smith explained. "We plan to give one-half to students and the other half will be divided up between faculty and contributors." The new seats will raise the student total from 3,200 to 3,650.

The replacement of the permanent seats, which was recommended by Smith and approved by a joint committee of faculty, students and general administrative representatives early this past March, will cost \$62,000. Financing will be provided by

the portion of the athletic budget designated for "Planning Improvements and Faculty Facility Repairs." The work will be completed by August 20 before students return for the fall semester.

"Some people have expressed concern about the looks and the effect on recruiting," Smith said, "but when you can give 900 more people a chance to watch Carolina basketball that justifies the decision."

Smith added that "two years from now no one will remember what type of seats we had. There won't be that much difference in comfort other than not having an arm rest."

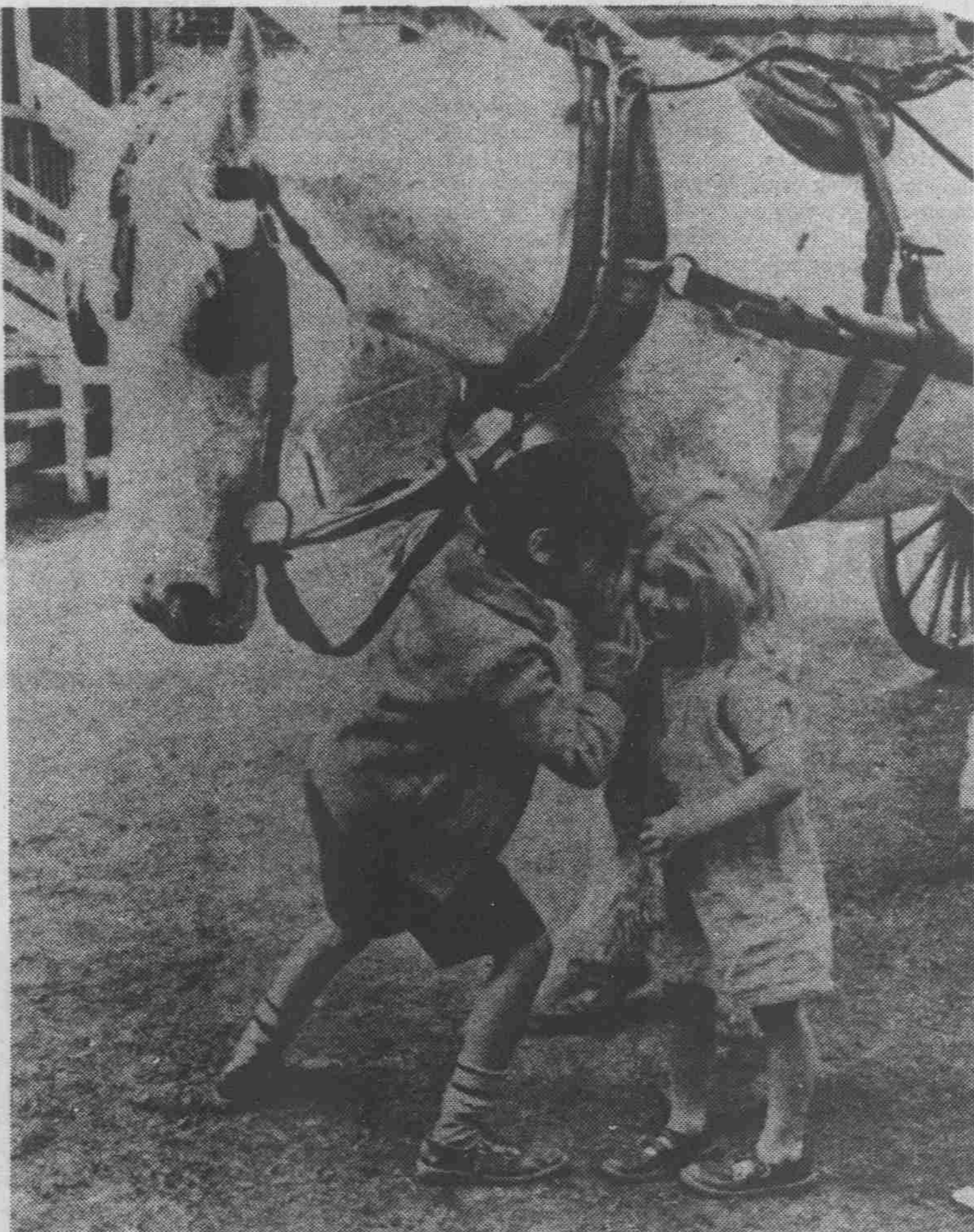
Asked about the possibility of enlarging Carmichael to accommodate the increasing number demand for basketball tickets, Smith said, "We have been exploring that for a long time but we don't know structurally if that can be done or to what extent. It's still in

the thought stage."

For the basketball fans who still aren't able to get seats in Carmichael, the old seats may be purchased as lifetime souvenirs. The seats cost \$10 for horizontal mounts, and \$5 for vertical mounts.

Inquiries about the seats should be made to Bob Savod, UNC's Sports Promotions Director, and checks should be made payable to the UNC Athletic Association.

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