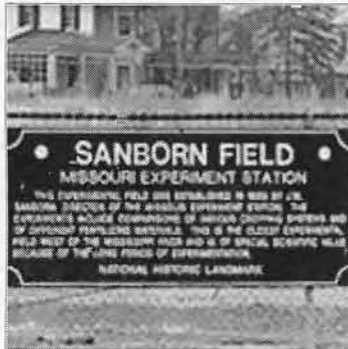


## What the fudge?

By Amy Rainey, Associate Editor. Posted December 13, 2002



Sean Gallagher/Senior Staff  
Photographer

Sanborn Field is located at the intersection of College Avenue and Rollins Road. Aureomycin, the precursor to penicillin, was discovered here during World War II.

It has been toured by people from all over the world. The precursor to penicillin, aureomycin, was discovered there during World War II. A time capsule has been buried there for 25 years.

All of these qualities and more lie within the 101-by-31-foot plot of land known as Sanborn Field at the corner of Rollins Road and College Avenue.

### What the fudge?

Sanborn Field — called Rotation Field until 1926 — has been part of campus since 1888 and is the second-oldest research field in the country and third-oldest in the world, Sanborn Field Manager Steven Troesser said.

The field, which contains 45 one-14th-acre plots, has corn, wheat, soybeans and many other crops growing on it. Next year, in the demonstration plot, workers will be growing the crops that were there when Lewis and Clark originally came through Missouri.

The field is used for research purposes, primarily in soil property changes, Troesser said. They use these soil samples to track environmental changes. For example, Troesser said, in the past there have been large discussions on acid rain.

"With a sample that goes back to 1915, we can see what effect environmental pollution would have had on the soil," Troesser said.

The soil sample that provided the first antibiotic, aureomycin, which was developed during World War II, is now on display in the Smithsonian Museum in Washington.

The time capsule goes way back, too.

"I think we buried the time capsule at our last celebration," said Charles Gantzer, associate professor of soil and atmospheric sciences.

The department also maintains an automated weather survey station on the field to produce accurate, up-to-date weather forecasts, Gantzer said.

Sanborn Field has a long history at MU.

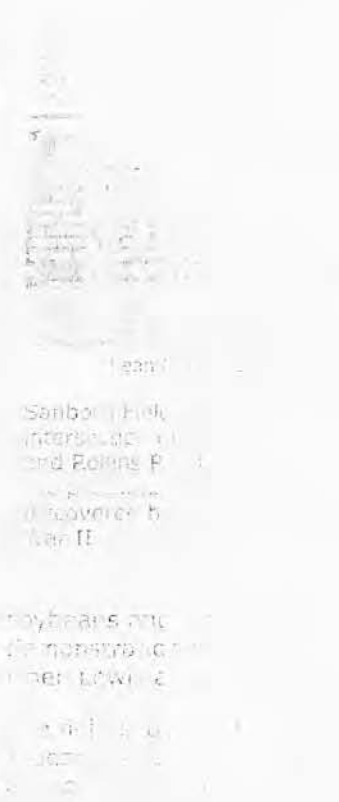
"In the late 1980s there used to be a snowball fight between the residence halls and the frats on College (Avenue)," Troesser said. "(Students) closed the street, and the police ran all the students into Sanborn Field. Two years later we put the fence up, because (they) destroyed all the wheat."

Apparently, preserving the history of the field has been a top priority for officials there.

A former director of the field, William Upchurch, compiled a list of objectives in 1991 "to communicate the role of Sanborn Field for future generations," according to an annual report on the field printed in 1998.

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Among the goals on the list were, "to maintain Sanborn Field as a research field laboratory" and "to maintain a historical field for collecting soil and plant samples."

— Sam Baker and Chase Davis contributed to this report

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