OHIO STATE FOOTBALL

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This book is dedicated to my mother, Katherine Biggs Roman
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The father of football at Ohio State

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Notes
Introduction

Almost as dear as the red, white and blue

In the fall of 1873, in the farmlands just north of Columbus, the state of Ohio opened a new school of higher education. At the time the school had only seven faculty members, and the faculty welcomed their first twenty-four students that September. In the twenty-first century that same school, the Ohio State University, has nearly seven thousand faculty members and it averages nearly sixty thousand students every year. The few men and women on campus in 1873 would have had difficulty recognizing the enormous institution that their school has since become.

Yet as surprised as those early students and faculty might have been to see so much growth, the faculty would likely have been even more surprised to discover a different modern development. Today the highest-paid faculty member at the Ohio State University—in fact, the highest paid employee of the state—is the university’s football coach. That coach is, to many, the public face of the school. The faculty of 1873 would have had no framework to grasp this situation.

Even today some people question the priorities at the university that have led to the current preeminence of football there. The students, however, even in those earliest days, might have understood.

* * *

The Ohio State University originally owed its existence to the Land-Grant College Act of 1862, a Congressional act that gave grants to states to fund colleges and universities. Prior to the Act, the best-known schools of higher education were intended to educate the social elites and were usually founded by reli-
Almost as dear as the red, white and blue

gious sects. Princeton University had been founded by Presbyterians, Harvard University and Yale University by Congregationalists, and Columbia University by the Church of England. Other American colleges and universities across the nation followed a similar pattern. Sectarian campus chapel services were considered part of a student’s training, and attendance was often a requirement of admission. For these reasons, colleges and universities were traditionally the province of the wealthy, of religious clerics in training, or both.

The Land-Grant College Act led to a social revolution. Less wealthy Americans found new opportunities for higher education, and new educational opportunities helped a more culturally and ethnically diverse group of Americans find opportunities for advancement. Those Americans included students who were not members of a specific, approved Christian denomination, or who for other reasons simply preferred to receive a secular education.

As with any revolutionary social change, the Land-Grant College Act also triggered passionate opposition. The backlash was particularly strong in Ohio, a state that was dominated in the nineteenth century by an unusually large number of sectarian religious colleges. Critics from those sectarian colleges accused the new Land-Grant school of being godless, and they were quick to question the secular values of its students.

As a result, the Ohio State students felt under attack and they were constantly fighting for respect. To these students, the criticisms of their school felt like narrow-minded bigotry, and they developed much of their sense of self-worth from how well they competed with the sectarian schools. They began to advocate for toleration and freedom of conscience, and their confidence in that cause rose and fell based on their successes and failures in athletic contests.

It was during this time that a new sport arrived on American college campuses. American “gridiron” football had originally been played on the East Coast by schools such as Princeton, Harvard, Yale, and Columbia, but national sports magazines quickly declared it a growing movement. By the 1880s that movement had come to Ohio. The sport offered the feel of gladiatorial battle, which made it attractive to students who wanted to measure themselves against their rivals. To Ohio State students, football became a way to prove their self-worth while honoring the name of their school.

The defensive and wary Ohio State students also did not always see eye to eye with the administration of their own university. In the hostile social environ-
ment of the time, the university’s board of trustees was often forced to act with deference to broader community attitudes, and the students often felt frustrated by conservative university policies. The trustees, in response, were often annoyed by the impetuous actions and attitudes of the students.

* 

As the Ohio State students developed their athletic teams and were otherwise promoting their school, they were also telling their own story. They told that story as it unfolded, in their student newspaper and their school yearbook. For a modern audience looking back, reading that story can reveal who these early students were, at least as they saw themselves, and what issues were important to them. It was in the Ohio State student newspaper in 1887 that an editor pleaded with his fellow students to remember to wear their school colors—to hold the colors of scarlet and gray “almost as dear as the red, white, and blue.”

As the university trustees grew increasingly annoyed at the enthusiasm and perceived impetuosity of the students, they became particularly concerned with irresponsible student behavior in support of their football team. Eventually the university assumed control over that team, and as a result the true story of its early years was lost. Most of what is believed about the birth of Ohio State football is a myth. The truth was forgotten.

In the decades that followed, the true story of those early students and their football team has been waiting to be rediscovered. That true story, much more than the myth, allows us to understand the success that the team has achieved since. The patterns of support, established from the start, were continued by those who followed. The students’ vision and enthusiasm, as well as their defensiveness, became the model for modern fans. Those who criticize Ohio State football today will see everything they find objectionable among its founders. Those who are fans of Ohio State football will see themselves.
Part One

Let us have a varsity team that would do honor to its name
Chapter One

Foot ball has suddenly made its appearance

Harry Hedges was a mountain of a man. His friends called him “Jumbo.” He spent his childhood working as a field laborer in Urbana, a farm town in western Ohio, and after he enrolled at the Ohio State University the college yearbook described him as “Not pretty, but massive.” By the spring of 1886 Hedges had become the president of the Ohio State sophomore class.

On the morning of April 28 of that year, the sophomores were walking out of the university’s chapel service when they saw a line of thirty men marching toward them double-file. One man in the formation waved the flag of the junior class. Another held the flag of the sophomores, and a third carried an oilcan, which they intended to use to burn the sophomore flag. Each of the thirty men also carried a fifteen-inch club to prevent anyone from stopping them. When the sophomores realized that these juniors were planning to burn their flag, they looked to Hedges. Hedges considered the situation but he could see only one option to stop them. Standing alone and unarmed, he placed himself in the path of the marching junior line and demanded the sophomore flag.

*

Six months earlier Hedges had been elected vice president of his class. The student newspaper covered the election and noted, “All the persuasive power of Jumbo’s muscle was needed to keep the various candidates from stuffing the ballot box or falsifying the returns.” Before the election Hedges had decided against being sophomore president, letting his roommate, Joseph Dyer, take that
position. Hedges and Dyer both came from farming families but Dyer planned to apply to a law school after he graduated from Ohio State.4 Hedges apparently agreed that the words “class president” would be more useful decorating his friend’s student record.

The university was still young at this time, with an enrollment of only 330 students. That total included the four graduating classes, plus a grad school, a prep school, and various two-year professional schools, including dentistry, pharmacy, and veterinary. The sophomore class of Hedges and Dyer had an enrollment of only forty students.5

The forty sophomores, representing the graduating class of 1888, were dwarfed by the seventy students who immediately followed them—the freshmen from the graduating class of 1889.6 When the university first opened in 1873, the school’s total enrollment was only twenty-four students.7 Year by year the enrollment steadily increased because year by year each new group of freshmen arrived at least a little bit larger than the one before it. The freshmen arriving in the fall of 1885 had almost twice as many members as any other class.

In October one of the freshmen attempted to use his class’s size to their advantage. That freshman, William Morrey, organized a voting bloc, intending for his classmates to dominate a campus election.8 When the three upper classes caught wind of what Morrey was up to, they responded with a united front, foiling the plot. “The freshmen attempted too much,” the other classes gloated immediately afterward.9

Tensions remained high among the classes in the weeks that followed. A divisive feeling of rivalry filled the air. It was during this time that Jumbo Hedges and Joe Dyer challenged the freshmen to a football game.10

* Football was a campus tradition. No one knew exactly when that tradition began. Sitting on the west side of campus was the North Dorm, the school’s larger dormitory, and the students who lived there had played football on their grounds for as long as anyone remembered. The Ohio State student newspaper, the Lantern, had noted as early as April 1881: “Foot-ball is the order of the day at the Dorm, and nearly every evening witnesses a jolly game.”11

Students had founded their newspaper in January of that same year, and the Lantern quickly began to hold a central position in campus life. It had a “local
editor” in charge of campus news, a “personal editor” who published campus gossip, and an “exchanges editor” who let the students know what was happening on the campuses of other schools. The newspaper also had a “literary editor” who invited and published more scholarly submissions from the student body and an editor-in-chief who held the project together and offered, through editorials, a running commentary on life at Ohio State.

The Lantern’s first editor-in-chief seemed somewhat less enthusiastic than others about football. He noted in the spring of 1881 that the North Dorm students were still playing football even while everyone else had begun to play baseball. It apparently took some time for everyone on campus to accept that football was played all year at the North Dorm.

The football that North Dorm students played was only informal pickup games but by the 1880s the students at major schools on the East Coast—Harvard, Princeton, Columbia, and Yale—had been playing football for several
Football has suddenly made its appearance with organized varsity teams. On some Eastern campuses the sport’s popularity was rivaling even baseball. National sports magazines declared organized football to be a growing movement, and people across the country watched with anticipation, expecting that movement to spread west.13

At Ohio State, in the fall of 1885, the sophomores and freshmen agreed to organize formal class football teams. It seemed as reasonable a way as any to settle their differences. The Lantern celebrated Ohio State’s step into organized football by cheering, “Foot ball has suddenly made its appearance.”14

*  

Jumbo Hedges and Joe Dyer needed to build the sophomore team and their first task was to pick a captain. A captain in those days, in any sport, was a team’s most important figure. He was the unquestioned leader on the field. In a role more like a modern coach, the captain in football trained his players, assigned them positions, and called his team’s plays during games.15
Hedges apparently agreed that Dyer would be the better captain for their team. Dyer was a varsity athlete—he was the starting right fielder on the Ohio State baseball team. Hedges participated in the pickup football games at the Dorm but, despite his mass and muscle, he had never played more organized campus sports.

Hedges preferred to be his team’s manager. A manager was in charge of all of the team’s off-field leadership responsibilities: recruiting players, finding opponents, and negotiating a schedule. Hedges already had an opponent so he focused on recruiting, inviting sophomore athletes with experience in the North Dorm games to join the class team.

One of the first people that he recruited was a sophomore named Fred Ball. Ball was a talented athlete. He was a member of the Ohio State tennis team, and he also was a member of a sophomore class tennis team that competed against the other classes. In the coming spring he would be a member of a new varsity football team, playing a position in the backfield called a “three-quarter back,” so it is most likely that Joe Dyer, as the sophomore football team’s captain, also put Ball in that position that fall.

Ball, like Hedges and Dyer, had joined the sophomore class government that year—Ball was the treasurer of their class—but he spent more of his energy as a campus leader on a different organization. As a freshman he had been the O.S.U. delegate to the state Y.M.C.A. convention, and the following fall the campus Y.M.C.A. elected him to serve as president of their branch. Hedges and Ball each respected the campus achievements of the other.

Hedges next recruited a sophomore named Chester Aldrich. In contrast to Ball, Hedges’s relationship with Aldrich seemed to be built on confrontation. Hedges and Aldrich were both born in Ohio but they came from separate worlds. Aldrich was a wealthy blue blood, known for his fine clothes and aristocratic manners. He was raised on an estate near Ashtabula and before he arrived at Ohio State he had attended a prestigious prep school. The patrician Aldrich thought that he deserved the kind of leadership positions that came to the gregarious Hedges naturally. The tension between the two came to a head late in the spring of their freshman year at the “Incognitus et Agnos,” a campus end-of-year satirical event run by North Dorm students. Aldrich objected to how Hedges wanted to use him in the show and he refused to perform, spoiling much of the fun for everyone.

Despite their differences, Hedges wanted Aldrich on the sophomore football team. Swallowing his pride, Aldrich accepted. The evidence suggests that Dyer put Aldrich next to Hedges on the line.
Foot ball has suddenly made its appearance

The freshmen were building their own class team and they were led by a student named Charles Cutler Sharp. Everybody called him “C.C.” In the era of J.P. Morgan, J.D. Rockefeller, and P.T. Barnum, men with business ambitions often preferred to be addressed by their initials. C.C. Sharp was a natural athlete and the leader of his class on almost any athletic field.

Sharp seemed most engaged at school when facing competition. He had earned a position on the varsity baseball team when he was still a prep student. He also was a sprinter and he set a personal goal of winning the school championship in the 100-yard dash. He was listed as a member of the class of 1889 but he challenged the rest of the freshmen to join him in trying to graduate early. He could not stand to see the class of 1888 have even that advantage over them.

Jesse Lee Jones was another North Dorm freshman but Jones had no interest in Sharp’s early-graduation challenge. Sharp had already spent two years on campus, as a student in the O.S.U. prep school, but for Jones the experience of university life was completely new. He had worked in a factory the previous year in his home town of Martins Ferry, and after he got to Ohio State he wanted to enjoy all that his school had to offer. He was elected sergeant-at-arms of the freshman class and he participated regularly in the North Dorm football games.

In those informal games Jones and Sharp each brought out the competitive spirit in the other. Sharp was an established class leader and Jones wanted to dethrone a campus king. Sharp understood what Jones wanted and he was not willing to let it happen. In one Dorm game the two faced each other on opposing lines. Tempers flared, and as the game played out they nearly sent each other to the campus infirmary.

Jumbo Hedges did not personally dislike most of these freshmen, and despite the rivalry between the classes most of them did not personally dislike him. He had known many of them since they were prep students. He had looked out for them as preps, even tutoring some of them when they needed help with Latin. He had grown up the oldest of eight children in his family and he continued to act like a big brother after he came to Ohio State.

During spring break one year earlier Hedges had put up a prep named Frank Raymund in his family home in Urbana, Ohio. Raymund remained a loyal friend afterward. Their friendship, however, did not stop Raymund from joining the freshman football team.
The freshmen and sophomores finished forming their class teams and they seemed ready to schedule the challenge game, but there was a delay. Personal issues called Hedges off campus and Joe Dyer refused to play without him. The two teams agreed to postpone their game until he returned.

While they waited, a bigger delay occurred. Winter arrived early as heavy storms rolled down from Canada. The campus grounds, covered in a deep layer of snow, had become impassible. Outdoor activities were cancelled. Snowbound students turned their competitive impulses toward playing poker in the dormitory, and the freshmen and sophomores agreed to postpone their football game until the weather cleared up in the spring.

Some people began to fear that the game would never be played. All through the winter the Lantern published articles on the topic of football to keep people thinking about the sport. The articles covered football at Harvard, football at Yale, football at Princeton, etc. In March a Lantern writer named Emma Boyd reminded her readers directly that “the Sophomore and Freshman classes are to have a foot ball contest this Spring.” She then offered her hope that the game would inspire others on campus to play and “promote a legitimate indulgence in what is already THE college game of America.”

Chester Aldrich then began to promote a more ambitious idea. In January the managing editor of the Lantern had put Aldrich in charge of the newspaper’s “Local Notes” column. In February Aldrich argued in his column that the time had come to form a varsity football team—a team of students who would compete against other schools and represent the entire university. The Ohio State students had only ever faced intercollegiate athletic competition with their varsity baseball team but Aldrich argued that football offered the same opportunities. “There is also plenty of good metal out of which can be formed a foot ball team that would do credit to the O. S. U.,” he said. “Let us have a Varsity team that would do honor to its name.” He repeated his call for a varsity football team in another column one month later.

Varsity sports were usually under the authority of a student organization named the Ohio State University Athletic Association. The Athletic Association had intended to field a varsity football team from the start but they had never succeeded in forming one. In 1881 the Association established three standing committees—one for baseball, one for football, and one for general athletics.
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That first year no football team was formed. The following year the committee did no better, and the Lantern asked, “Where is the foot-ball? What a grand game could be had on the campus.”46 When no progress was made in the third year the Lantern began to plead that “a first-class foot-ball team be organized at once…. We ought to challenge our neighbors to measure their ability with us in that line. It would be a splendid advertisement for the university.”47 After that year, the ineffectual football committee was dropped. By the time Chester Aldrich began calling for varsity football during the winter of 1886 the Association had long since given up on that plan.

Over the years Ohio State students had tried to establish varsity teams in many sports—baseball, bicycling, rifle, rowing, and more.48 Other than baseball none of these teams lasted more than a season. Students always formed their teams while caught up in the excitement of each new project but by the following year that early excitement always cooled. No one was more frustrated than a student named William Stowe Devol, a senior who had watched his cricket team, his archery team, and his equestrian team disappear.49 The Athletic Association’s failure to maintain varsity sports was a recurring topic of conversation throughout the 1880s.50

The loss of teams cost the students opportunities to compete against other schools, and losing those opportunities hurt the school’s ability to maintain any intercollegiate rivalries. Ohio State students did have rivalries with other colleges in the state but their interactions with those schools were fairly limited. With few opportunities for intercollegiate competition, the students identified most immediately with their various campus organizations—their clubs, their fraternities, and, especially, their graduating classes. The feelings of rivalry for Ohio State students were most often directed toward other Ohio State students.

As a result, the students did not have much school spirit.51 With varsity sports struggling there was little spark to keep the fires of school spirit burning. Only class spirit thrived. Aldrich spoke for many students who wanted a more intense emotional connection to their university. They wanted to feel pride in Ohio State as a way to feel pride in themselves. They wanted to feel superior to their college rivals. “Let us have some college spirit,”52 Aldrich pleaded.

Jumbo Hedges saw the value in Aldrich’s varsity football solution.

* * *

In January 1886 a local Columbus attorney offered Joe Dyer an apprenticeship.53 A legal apprenticeship was a path to law school that was quicker and surer
even than college. Dyer accepted the offer and withdrew from school. He later became a city prosecutor, and he eventually returned to Ohio State as a faculty member in the O.S.U. School of Law.

More immediately, however, Jumbo Hedges needed a new roommate. He offered Dyer’s spot in his dorm room to a prep student named Charles Weybrecht. Weybrecht seemed not to have many other friends on campus. He weighed two hundred pounds and was saddled with the nickname “Fatty.” Chester Aldrich joked that when “Fatty” began rooming with “Jumbo” the school would have to empty the room below them, or at least add new building supports. Weybrecht got even by dumping a bucket of water on Aldrich from the second-floor dorm room that he now shared with Hedges.

Dyer’s withdrawal also meant that Hedges inherited the class presidency. “Jumbo now rules the Sophomore class meetings with an iron hand,” read the news. The sophomores held a special election and chose Aldrich as their new vice president. These changes in leadership guided the events of the rest of the school year.

* *

In April the long winter finally ended and students who had been cooped up in their dormitories were anxious to stretch their legs. They had spent months together with just each other to look at. The female students who attended the university were not permitted to live on campus and, with spring fever in the air, young men needed an outlet to release their pent-up high spirits.

On April 28, at just after 2 a.m., a group of sophomores snuck out of their dorm rooms and gathered in the darkness outside. Then they snuck into University Hall, the tallest building on campus, and climbed up into its tower. Above the tower they raised a flag—cherry and lavender, the sophomore class colors. Under their flag they added a message directed to the junior class. The university’s thirty juniors were the graduating class of 1887. Two years earlier, as freshmen, they had tried to raise their own flag above University Hall. They had been stopped in the act, so for the new prank the sophomores—the class of ’88—hung a banner with a message to remind everyone of that failure: “Wanted to but couldn’t—’87.” Beneath that banner they hung an effigy of the junior class, wearing the junior class colors of olive-green and pink.

The juniors woke up the next morning to find the sophomore flag and taunting message flying together over the campus. Halbert Edwin Payne, the junior
Foot ball has suddenly made its appearance

class president, was the best pitcher on the varsity baseball team. He was 5’11” and the Lantern described him as having the physique of Apollo. Payne was not the type to back down from a challenge, and he knew that he would never hear the end of it if he let the sophomores get away with a prank this good at the juniors’ expense. So he prepared a response.

At 8:00 a.m. the University Hall janitor took down the material hanging from the tower, and by 8:30 the juniors had the sophomores’ cherry and lavender flag. At a quarter to noon the men of the class, clubs in hand and an oilcan ready, lined up double-file for a march across campus. At the front of their line was H.E. Payne. Just as they started their march, however, they found Jumbo Hedges blocking their path and shouting at Payne, demanding the return of the sophomore flag.

Students gathered around Hedges and the juniors, waiting to see what would happen. Fatty Weybrecht shook with a “passion for war” but he understood that as a prep student this was not his fight. Chester Aldrich and Fred Ball both watched from a few yards away, Aldrich wearing his most expensive Victorian
three-piece suit. The juniors attempted to march around Hedges. Hedges reached out to them trying to take back the sophomore flag. As he extended his arm one of the juniors clubbed him across the face. Hedges staggered and his face was bloodied, but he managed to stand his ground. Then, as he regained his bearings, he began fighting back.69

Hedges’s classmates were too stunned to react until Fred Ball jumped into the fray. Ball quickly took a shot to the face similar to the one that struck Hedges. Ball fell, and on that cue the others sophomores swarmed. The juniors frantically swung their clubs at the charging sophomore bodies. The sophomores began wrestling the juniors to the ground. Chester Aldrich’s fine clothes were left in tatters.70

The two sides tugged at the sophomore flag until it ripped apart. The sophomores then turned their attention to the juniors’ flag. The junior flag-bearer ran. That retreat disgusted H.E. Payne, who later said that if he had a rope he would have hung the coward.71 The sophomores chased the flag-bearer and the fighting stretched across campus. In the end the junior flag was also ripped apart and Hedges grabbed the largest piece to finally wipe the blood from his face.72

A few days later, in his “Local Notes” column, Aldrich attempted to capture the moment:

The Seniors and ladies on the steps, and the professors from their windows, like the old men sitting on the walls of Troy, too weak to fight, watched the combatants on the campus below, asking who is this or that. He that towers above the others—can that be Hector? Yes, but they call him Jumbo.73

Diverse reactions to the campus battle soon appeared in the Columbus city newspapers. The Columbus Dispatch, a local daily, published the story that evening with an outraged headline: “Terrific Conflict Between the Juniors and Sophomores at State University: Bloody Faces and Bruised Heads.”74 The two classes “met in deadly conflict,” they reported.75 The Dispatch’s competitor, the Ohio State Journal, took a much more cavalier, boys-will-be-boys tone the next morning: “Students At Play: State University Pupils Tumble Over One Another in Struggle for Colors.”76

The Ohio State students were inclined to embrace the second interpretation. After all, they did not see themselves as savages. The Lantern took the State Journal’s interpretation a step further and proclaimed the incident a bonding experience and
celebrated it as a highlight of the year. They wrote that events of this kind give college life its “spice” and “seasoning,” and as a result of such skirmishes, men come to know each other; to know another’s worth, and see their own failings; to have the corners rounded and ugly prominences knocked off; and, more than all, to learn what the English boys learn at Rugby and Oxford, to forget the individual and to feel and fight for the community.77

The freshmen were impressed by how well the battle turned out and wanted a piece of the action. Chester Aldrich even dared them: “The Freshmen have had an example set to them of the way they should go when they arrive at the proper age.”78 A few days later Jesse Lee Jones and Frank Raymund led a group of their classmates up the tower to raise their own class flag.79 Their colors were garnet and light blue. Jones and Raymund wanted to add a taunting message as part of their fun so they challenged the seniors. Then they signed their own names under their note to make sure that C.C. Sharp did not get the credit.

In the days that followed, the twenty members of the senior class, including William Stowe Devol, were tempted to respond, but by then the faculty had begun watching over the campus with increased scrutiny. With graduation only weeks away, the seniors had the good sense to try to keep their noses clean. The sophomores scoffed that the freshman prank had failed to steal their class’s spotlight.80

Yet everyone had grudging respect that the freshmen ringleaders had been bold enough, or foolish enough, to personally sign their work.81 True to the prediction made by the Lantern, the classes were never closer.

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For Jumbo Hedges and Chester Aldrich this moment of campus unity felt like an opportunity, and they used the opportunity to form a varsity football team.82 Hedges became the varsity manager and Aldrich became varsity captain, so Hedges recruited players while Aldrich ran the team’s practices. Hedges invited H.E. Payne from the junior class and Fatty Weybrecht from the prep program. Dominating the lineup, however, were the football players from the freshman and sophomore class teams. Among the freshmen were C.C. Sharp, Jesse Lee Jones, and Frank Raymund, as well as William Morrey, the leader of the freshman voting-bloc plot the previous fall. This football team was the first united under the colors of the university.83
As manager, Hedges also had the responsibility of finding an opponent. This task proved much harder. No other school in central Ohio had a varsity football team. The only varsity football teams that were widely known at that time were those at the major schools in the East—Harvard, Princeton, Colum-
Foot ball has suddenly made its appearance

bia, and Yale—and none of those established teams were likely to accept a challenge from an upstart like Ohio State. Even if an Eastern school might have accepted, the cost for an O.S.U. team to travel so far just to play a game would have been prohibitively expensive. As a result, the O.S.U. students continued to practice for a game that they did not really expect to play.

Within a few weeks the enthusiasm that had united the football team faded, just as it had faded for so many Ohio State teams before. Frank Raymund suffered an injury in one of the practices, and his hobbling across campus for the next few weeks looked like it would be the only lasting consequence of varsity football’s existence. Aldrich and Hedges hoped that their work would prove to be the start of something bigger but for the moment it had hit a dead end.

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Meanwhile the freshman and sophomore class football teams never played their challenge game. In the short-term excitement of forming a varsity team the class game was forgotten. Early the next fall the Lantern remembered the challenge and tried to revive interest in the game, but the moment had passed.