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*Gettysburg College*

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## Description

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One might conclude from the good doctor's treatment that sports had attracted, up to 1932 at least, but minuscule interest on the part of Gettysburg undergraduates. That this was not the case is made clear by perusing the columns of student publications, the minutes of innumerable faculty meetings, and certainly in consulting the recollections of old grads. The fortunes of the College's intercollegiate athletic teams played a much larger part in life on the campus. Moreover, if the athletic program then, or now, served any viable educational purpose, a claim often advanced for it, surely it deserves more attention than Dr. Hefelbower gave it.

Some members of the campus community cherish the notion that competitive athletics have no place in institutions of higher learning. In their view, intercollegiate sports programs, particularly in our own day, constitute a supine surrender by academia to anti-intellectualism and commercialism. Such distractions, contend these critics, represent an aberration, if not a perversion, in the educational process - an obstacle in the long struggle of Western Man to liberate himself from ignorance. [*excerpt*]

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History Series Number 4

INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS AT GETTYSBURG COLLEGE

1879-1919

# Gettysburg



"Polly" Sieber  
All-American

The Gettysburg Bulletin  
December 1976

ATHLETES ARE GREAT LOVERS -  
LOVE AN ATHLETE  
(Bumper sticker seen on the Gettysburg  
College campus, December 2, 1974)



## History Series Number 4

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# Intercollegiate Athletics At Gettysburg College 1879-1919

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*Gettysburg College*

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## Gettysburg College History Series

Gettysburg College presents the fourth volume in this Series, *Intercollegiate Athletics At Gettysburg College, 1879-1919*, written by Dr. Robert L. Bloom, Professor of History.

The previous volumes in the Series are *Yonder Beautiful and Stately College Edifice: A History of Pennsylvania Hall (Old Dorm)*, written by Charles H. Glatfelter, Professor of History; *Engineering at Gettysburg College*, written by William C. Darrah, Professor Emeritus of Biology; and *Gettysburg College and the Lutheran Connection: An Open-Ended Story of a Proud Relationship*, written by Harold A. Dunkelberger, Professor of Religion.

The editors,

Willard G. Books  
Edwin D. Freed  
Charles H. Glatfelter

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It goes almost without saying that whatever sins of omission or commission characterize this finished product are my sole responsibility.

December 20, 1976

R. L. B.

### Introduction

I N 1932, as a part of Gettysburg College's Centennial observance, Dr. Samuel G. Hefelbower '91, a quondam member of the faculty and from 1904 to 1910 President of the College, wrote and edited a largely filiopietistic volume entitled *A History of Gettysburg College, 1832-1932*. In this 446-page narrative, Dr. Hefelbower devoted considerable space to the development of extracurricular life on the campus. He allotted forty pages to the rise of Greek letter fraternities, eight pages to the Woman's League, and nine additional pages to such now-defunct student pursuits as the Bible Society, the Linnaean Society, and the Y.M.C.A. Honorary fraternities and departmental societies took up eleven more pages. Yet he made only three references to athletics, and together they totaled but fifteen lines of print or less than half a page.

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Some members of the campus community cherish the notion that competitive athletics have no place in institutions of higher learning. In their view, intercollegiate sports programs, particularly in our own day, constitute a supine surrender by academia to anti-intellectualism and commercialism. Such distractions, contend these critics, represent an aberration, if not a perversion, in the educational process—an obstacle in the long struggle of Western Man to liberate himself from ignorance.

One has only to review the current scene to grant that this indictment has some basis in fact. Yet, when in the 1880s and 1890s Gettysburg College



undergraduates clamored for an athletic program, they were in line not only with their contemporaries, but with a tradition as old as Western Civilization. Popular interest in sports dates back to our cultural beginnings. It was present in the Nile valley thousands of years ago, and the ancient Greeks certainly displayed it. "It is in Homer," a historian has noted, "that we first find the true spirit of sport, the desire to be the best and to excel all other men, the joy in the effort."<sup>1</sup> It would be hard to find anywhere a better expression of the athletic impulse.

Europeans migrating to the New World in colonial times faced a wilderness where the scratch for survival largely ruled out expenditure of energy on much else. However, by the early nineteenth century, college students along the Eastern seaboard enjoyed enough economic security and consequent leisure to engage in activities not directly related to keeping body and soul together. As early as that time, we are told, undergraduates at Yale, Harvard, and Columbia were staging "football rushes."<sup>2</sup> Before the Civil War, however, college authorities made little or no effort either to sanction or supervise athletic exercises for their students. For the most part, indifference or downright hostility led college administrations and faculties to post taboos and levy fines for such trivialities as ballplaying on the campus.

Not untypical, therefore, was the decree handed down on September 30, 1837 by the Gettysburg College board of trustees. They banned "hand-ball or foot-ball in the College yard" and ordered fines of fifty cents for each violation of this rule. Repeated infractions could lead to the dismissal of the guilty student. It may be that the regulation was prompted simply by concern for the College's property, for a year later the trustees authorized the President of the College to procure "a large hand-ball . . . for the use of the College."

In the 1840s, German immigrants brought to America the *Turnvereine*, a gymnastic movement which gained temporary popularity on campuses. But this hardly satisfied the natural urge for competitive activity and ere long students were engaging in rowing and baseball contests. In the beginning these were intramural affairs, but in 1852 crews representing Harvard and Yale met in a rowing contest on Lake Winnepesaukee in what was probably the first intercollegiate athletic encounter in America.<sup>3</sup>

As it did for so many other aspects of American life, the Civil War era marked a turning point in American attitudes toward sports. Those soldiers who had relieved the tedium of camp life by playing baseball carried both the interest in and practice of the game into the postwar years. Baseball soon became an absorbing activity for college students. College faculties began to exhibit a more liberal attitude on the matter, and it took but a short while to transform what had begun as interclass into intercampus competition. Before long intercollegiate athletics lost much of the innocence with which they began. Howard Savage, an authority on the subject, has fixed 1880 as the year which marked a dividing line between the earlier, informal, limited, and largely student-controlled athletic endeavor and that which subsequently emerged—the professionalism, the commercialism, and the "big time," often alumni-dominated sport spectacles.<sup>4</sup>

By the 1890s, a social historian tells us, "A rage for competitive athletics . . . was sweeping the campuses of the nation." He adds that "a combative team spirit became virtually synonymous with college spirit [and] athletic prowess became a major determinant of institutional status." Another chronicler of American life of that decade confirms this view and points to football as making the greatest impact. "In the nineties," he writes, "Yale became the first football factory and led the trend toward anti-intellectualism and social mobility . . . By the turn of the century 'We toil not, we agitate not, but we play football' became the campus slogan."<sup>5</sup>

At Gettysburg, students envisaged a much more modest program than that which prevailed at the larger and more prestigious institutions. Even so they confronted at first trustee apathy, faculty hostility, and a degree of undergraduate indifference. The nineties, however, were a watershed in the history of the College in more ways than one, and for the mass of students the "big change" came then. In that decade, intercollegiate football, baseball, track, and basketball became an integral part of campus life at Gettysburg, a feature of student existence which endures to the present day.

It is the conception, gestation, birth, infancy, adolescence, and subsequent growth of this phase of student life at Gettysburg that is related in the pages which follow.

## Conception and Gestation, 1863-1890

NOT EVEN the looming menace of a Rebel invasion in June 1863 could deter Gettysburg College students from engaging in a game of baseball.<sup>6</sup> The *Adams Sentinel* of June 23, 1863 reported that a game played on the college grounds a few days earlier had been called on account of darkness. Ten days later the players in such a game would have encountered difficulties, since the playing field was occupied by Yanks and Rebels engaged in more deadly combat.

The spring which saw Lee surrender to Grant at Appomattox found a baseball nine made up of Gettysburg College students meeting an aggregation from the town in two games which, so far as the record reveals, were the first instances of athletic competition between the students and an outside foe. The college team won the first game 54-40; and in the second game, one in which the pitchers of both teams obviously settled down to more serious work, the students again emerged victorious, this time by a 17-12 score.<sup>7</sup>

During the following fifteen years student baseballers at Gettysburg played an occasional game with various town teams and nearby athletic clubs, winning six and losing four, thus early establishing a winning tradition. In 1881, however, they faced a collegiate opponent for the first time. A team from Dickinson crossed the mountain from Carlisle to help inaugurate intercollegiate baseball competition at Gettysburg and, in the process, initiate a diamond rivalry which has endured now for eighty-five years. Unfortunately for the Gettysburg lads, this first venture ended on a sour note as the visiting nine scored a 9-5 victory in what the 1899 *Spectrum* later described as "a well contested game." The Gettysburg lineup for this pioneer effort included Charles Reinewald '85, as the pitcher; John B. McPherson '83, at first base; Reuben M. Linton '83 at second base; and David M. McIlhenny '83, playing third base. In the outfield, Horace L. Jacobs '82, was

<sup>1</sup>E. Norman Gardiner, *Athletics of the Ancient World* (Oxford, England, 1930), p. 18.

<sup>2</sup>Ernest Earnest, *Academic Procession: An Informal History of the American College* (Indianapolis, 1953), pp. 30, 221.

<sup>3</sup>Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University: A History* (New York, 1962), pp. 152-154.

<sup>4</sup>John S. Brubacher and William Rudy, *Higher Education in Transition: An American History: 1636-1956* (New York, 1958), p. 127.

<sup>5</sup>John Higham, "The Reorientation of American Culture," an essay included in John Weiss, ed., *The Origins of Modern Consciousness* (Detroit, 1965), p. 26; E. Digby Baltzell, "The Social Insulation of the Traditional Elite," included in Thomas R. Frazier and John M. Blum, eds., *The Private Side of American History* (New York, 1975), II, 87.

<sup>6</sup>The College was officially named Pennsylvania College of Gettysburg at its chartering in 1832. In 1921 the name was officially changed to what it had long been popularly called—Gettysburg College. References to athletic contests both in student publications and in the press at large normally identified the teams as representing Gettysburg College. This account will follow their example.

<sup>7</sup>If these scores appear astronomical to present lovers of the game, they should compare them with the scores of the first intercollegiate baseball game on record. Amherst and Williams met in baseball on July 1, 1859 with Amherst triumphing 73-32 in a match which ended (mercifully) after 26 innings: See the *New York Times*, February 23, 1975.



in centerfield; Robert M. Hardinge '85 (misspelled by the *Spectrum* writer as "Harding") patrolled the left-field; and John M. Lentz '84 guarded the rightfield area. The positions of catcher and shortstop were filled by "Woodward" and "Culp" respectively. No students with either of these surnames appear in the *Alumni Record, 1832-1932* as attending the College in 1881, nor does the Preparatory Department catalog carry their names as "preps." It is likely that in line with the general practice at the time "townies" were recruited to fill lineup gaps.

Despite this unpromising start, Gettysburg students refused to be discouraged, and the following spring they again fielded a baseball team. The *Pennsylvania College Monthly* for May 2, 1882<sup>8</sup> reported that a number of students had gathered in the College Chapel and had organized "a baseball association." The 1882 season was too far spent to arrange much of a baseball schedule for that year; but a Dickinson team again appeared and once more returned home with the laurels, this time by a 21-15 count. Perhaps this explains why for the next two years interest waned in challenging a foreign foe and why students limited their baseball activity to intramural contests.

In 1885, however, a new generation of students bravely ventured to risk another game with Dickinson. This time the Gettysburg nine prevailed, scoring a 11-10 victory in what the 1899 *Spectrum* later described as "the most exciting, most interesting, and peaceful game ever witnessed." The *Spectrum* writer may be excused for his hyperbole when it is remembered that this athletic triumph represented the first ever gained by a Gettysburg College baseball team in intercollegiate competition.

This notable victory, however, was not the first conquest of an athletic team from another college. Like baseball, football came to the Gettysburg campus unofficially and without the expressed sanction of the faculty. Also like the diamond sport, football began as an interclass affair. In 1877, only eight years after Princeton and Rutgers had inaugurated the autumnal madness, the football fever struck Gettysburg College students. According to the account in the *Spectrum* years later (1899), two teams were formed from the student body, each consisting of "twenty-one men and two boys," and they went at the game with a will. "The Object seemed to be to kick each other's shins," reported the *Spectrum*, and as the game progressed the cry most often heard was "Ottobounds." "The crowd that hollered most won the game." The *College Monthly* of March 1877 declared that the participants played hard, but it observed further that

"one-half of those fellows wouldn't work half that hard to saw wood for their mothers."

In 1879 Gettysburgians made their entry into intercollegiate football. On September 27 of that year occurred the first intercollegiate game in the history of the College. As had been the case in the 1881 baseball game, the opponent was a team from Dickinson. The Carlisle boys appeared a week earlier than expected, and Gettysburg students organized hastily and went forth to battle the invaders. The story of this game, as reported in the *College Monthly* for November 1879, deserves lengthy quotation:

The game was begun about 2 P.M., with the ball in the hands of Penn'a, and Capt. Loudon initiated it with a good fly. For some time, "Out o' bounds" was about the only thing heard, and the game promised to be very uninteresting. But at the end of the third inning, the bounds were considerably widened and this cry became less frequent and the game more interesting. A "foul" ended the first inning in favor of Dickinson, but the second was more gloriously won by Penn'a, [with] a vigorous kick from Gaver sending the ball home. A brilliant play was made by Linn in the 14th inning. As the ball was kicked from the starting base, he ran in, and with a vigorous application of his right pedal extremity, sent the ball back home before it had been touched by any other man. That inning was played in less than half a minute.

The game ended at 5 P.M. in a glorious victory for our team, demonstrating the fact that they are mighty in the field as well as in study, and that they have good *understandings* [*College Monthly's* italics]. The score stood, - Penn'a 11; Dickinson, 6. About 30 Dickinson students were here, and all expressed themselves highly pleased with their visit.<sup>9</sup>

At this late date it is not easy to discover what absorbed the energies of those young men for three hours that afternoon. In line with the normal practice of those days, a degree of improvisation governed the rules in effect. No doubt it had aspects of soccer, perhaps a bit of English Rugby, and influence from baseball, as the division into innings shows. Whatever passed for football that afternoon, it was not as hazardous as the game came to be or as it was often played elsewhere at the time.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup>In his *Dickinson College, 1783-1933* (Carlisle, 1933), James H. Morgan states (p. 435) that Dickinson met her first intercollegiate football opponent in 1885 in a game with Swarthmore. The 1879 Gettysburg-Dickinson encounter escaped his notice, possibly because whatever the game was it hardly resembled football as later played.

<sup>10</sup>A Rutgers-Columbia game about the same time found twenty men to a side and "they kicked not only the ball but each other." Since substitutes were not permitted, "a man left the field only if carried off." See Ernest Earnest, *Academic Procession* (Indianapolis, 1953), p. 221. For an account of a Harvard-Princeton game of 1878 which featured similar play see John M. Murrin and James N. Rosenheim, "America at Play," *Princeton Alumni Weekly*, October 6, 1975, pp. 13-19.

Nevertheless, if the *College Monthly* is to be believed, these two little backwater Pennsylvania colleges had already adopted a regulation which a year later was to be made official everywhere—limiting a side to eleven players. As this journal reported it, the combatants lined up as follows:

DICKINSON	GETTYSBURG
C. R. Edge '80 (Capt.)	E. L. Loudon '81 (Capt.)
W. L. Boswell '80	A. H. F. Fisher '80
O. T. Coffey '80	T. C. Linn '81
W. P. Campbell '80	R. F. Forrest '81
G. Maddox '81	R. M. Scott '81
W. C. Robinson '80	M. H. Valentine '82
J. Withington '82	T. M. Gaver '82
G. C. Stull '82	W. F. Musser '81
S. C. Champion '82	R. Linton '83
W. C. Kramer '82	W. D. Loudon '83
A. Stodgen '82	D. M. McIlhenny '83

Three weeks later, on October 18, teams from the two colleges met in a return match at Carlisle. This game almost did not come off, for the Gettysburg faculty initially denied a student request to accept a Dickinson invitation to play a return game on the Carlisle grounds. Apparently, a fervent plea on the part of the students softened some professorial hearts, for the faculty eventually relented and granted permission for the game. As reported in the *College Monthly* for November 1879, the faculty voted three resolutions:

*Resolved*, That the action of the Faculty in declining to allow the Foot-ball club to go to Carlisle to play with the Dickinson College club was in accordance with a fixed principle that such excursions are not in accordance with the objects of College communities and are subversive of the best discipline.

*Resolved*, however, in view of the position of our students in relation to the Dickinson students, and to relieve them from any charge of want of courtesy, that we consent to the petition.

*Resolved*, That we now enact a standing rule, that, hereafter, no proposition looking to the making or accepting a challenge to play any game or engage in any athletic exercises, away from the College grounds, be entertained at all by the Faculty.

So long as these resolutions were inflexibly administered, particularly the third one, intercollegiate athletics at Gettysburg faced rough going. However, in this instance the faculty proved amenable enough to permit the Gettysburg students to return the earlier Dickinson visit. In the game at Dickinson the home team gained an 11-10 victory with what the 1899 *Spectrum* charged was a "stuffed team," that is, one made up of players not necessarily matriculated as Dickinson College students. It is impossible today to determine the validity of this accusation, but the use of players not bona fide students was a common practice almost everywhere and not unknown at "Penn'a College."

The considerable interest aroused by these rude

<sup>8</sup>Hereafter cited as the *College Monthly*.

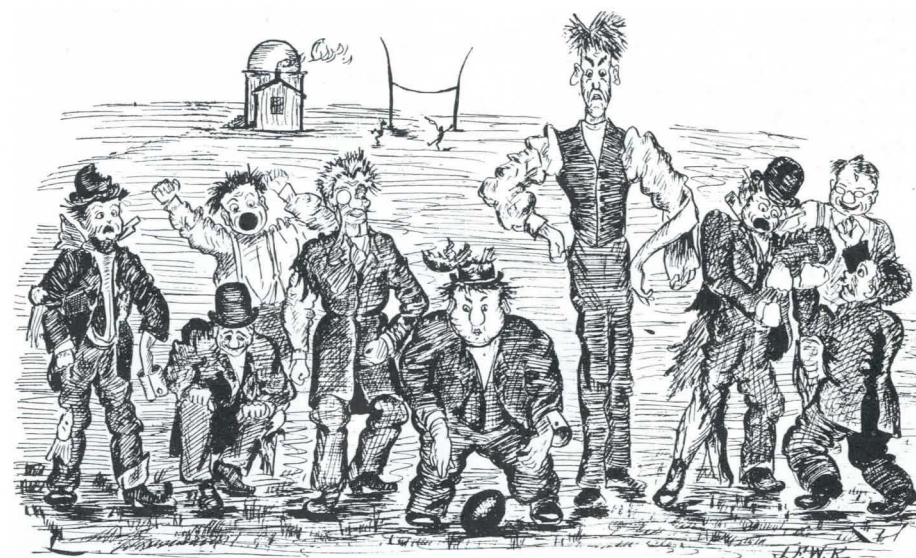


beginnings in intercollegiate athletic contests alarmed traditionalists on the campus who were satisfied with the conventional sports which hitherto had prevailed. As described by the 1899 *Spectrum*, it was "corner-ball, town-ball, long-ball and croquet [which heretofore] seemed to occupy the attention of the boys when not engaged in class-room work." The writer noted that "contests in croquet" took place on "the ground immediately back of our present Laboratory . . . and many were the contestants for local honors." Some hardy souls, he continued, found such exercise too tame and "some of the boys gave vent to their athletic spirits by breaking windows, rolling cannon balls through the halls, etc." Such manifestations of overabundant youthful elan very probably contributed to the decision of the trustees in 1872 to erect the McCreary Gymnasium.

Despite the evidence of ill-suppressed super-energies on the part of the students, the college authorities, in the words of the 1899 *Spectrum*, "seemed in all those former years to be influenced to a certain degree against the progressive athletic spirit." The *College Monthly*, which was more the voice of the faculty than of student opinion, campaigned throughout the 1880s against such diversions as baseball and football on the campus. In November 1879, this publication suggested that students might better take their physical exercise in the gymnasium. A writer, signing himself "Emely," used its columns in June 1882 to decry competitive athletics, charging that they created excitement not conducive to study; that the expenditure of money for teams raised the educational costs for all students; that rather than promoting, as claimed, "true manhood," they ended in the petting and attending of athletes as one would a race-horse; and that athletics promoted such immoral habits as profanity and gambling and even fostered "drunkenness in large crowds." Denying that he objected to physical exercise as such (breaking windows and rolling cannon balls?), "Emely" insisted that athletics should be kept in perspective:

When a boat race attracts more attention than the Commencement exercises or a game of base-ball awakens greater enthusiasm than a contest in oratory, it is time to ask whether the *brain* does not receive too little attention, the *brawn* too much? To become expert in the use of the oar or fleet of foot, is far less important than to master the curriculum of study.

Such jeremiads failed to divert Gettysburg undergraduates from their determination to participate in what was now becoming a national trend on college campuses. This led one unhappy dissident to complain in the December 1884 issue of the *College Monthly* that athletics "are given a prominence they not only do not deserve, but which must necessarily



As J.F.W. Kitzmeyer '90 remembered the first football "rush line" of 1887.

prove harmful and possibly disastrous to the participant's success as a student." Alarmed devotees of tennis and croquet, disturbed by the enthusiasm aroused by a baseball triumph over Dickinson in 1885, decried the excessive interest in baseball.

In February 1886, the *College Monthly* announced the formation of an Athletic Association on the campus. The announcement made it clear that "the object . . . is general physical exercise and not, as in the case in so many colleges, the playing of inter-collegiate games of foot-ball, base-ball, etc." According to the *Gettysburg Compiler* of February 2, 1886, Dean Philip M. Bikle would serve as president of the organization. Very probably the Dean and the faculty hoped thus to create a device for cooling student agitation for intercollegiate sports. If so, they were entirely unsuccessful. In vain did the *College Monthly* warn of the dangers inherent in football. An Editorial Note in the December 1886 issue called attention to the fatal injuries suffered by a player at "a sister college."<sup>11</sup> It noted further that the game, formerly "interesting and healthful," had degenerated into a brutal affair. The writer pointed to "an element of savagery inherent in the game . . . which the stimulus of a contest develops to a reckless and dangerous extent." And in June 1888, over the signature of "G. D. S.," the journal carried a long blast at the "barbarous game," assailing it as one in which only "the bullies and the barbarous carry off the prize."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup>This regrettable event occurred to a Dickinson player during a game between Dickinson and Swarthmore in the fall of 1886. See Morgan, p. 435.

<sup>12</sup>"G. D. S." undoubtedly was Dr. George D. Stahley, '71, an Easton physician who joined the faculty in 1889 as Professor of Physical Culture and Hygiene. Once he was on the campus as a member of the faculty, however, Dr. Stahley changed his mind on this matter as will be seen below.

It is true that by this time football had begun to shed some of its soccer-like characteristics and take on more of the features of the English game of Rugby. The faculty thus had real cause for concern. Yet, warnings appearing in the *College Monthly* apparently made slight impression on undergraduate minds, for in the fall of 1887 some students were prepared to have another go at football. Members of the Class of 1890 met, chose a committee to procure a football, and solicited funds to meet anticipated expenses. Writing in the 1893 *Spectrum*, John F. W. Kitzmeyer '90 reported that when "the curious spheroid" arrived on campus many were surprised that it was not perfectly round. Nonetheless, class members formed a team which Kitzmeyer described as "the first eleven in our history." Evidently he was unaware of the two Gettysburg-Dickinson encounters in 1879, or perhaps he did not consider them as proper examples of the game.

At all events, a nondescript team was formed from the remainder of the student body and the boys went at it. Fortunately, Kitzmeyer has left an account of this first try at "modern football" on the Gettysburg campus, a highly amateurish affair as Kitzmeyer himself recognized:

To the football critic the very appearance of the rush lines, when first they formed, would have been a huge burlesque on the game. It must be held in mind that we knew almost nothing about it. . . . A book of rules was on the field and there was as much wrangling about the meaning of those rules as there was playing. Each was sure he understood the game and each was vociferously yelling advice which nobody heeded. . . . Before we had begun playing we had heard that football was a rather rough game, and most of us donned our older "derbies" and more shabby cutaways, but before we had played a little we saw our "stiffies" dented and knocked to segments, our garments tattered and our shoes



burst. Ideas of what the game was like began to dawn upon us and many of us, discovering that we were not at all designed or adapted to play football, gravitated out of the teams. . . . On the whole it would be difficult to say whether our endeavors to begin football history were pitiable or comical.

Meanwhile, student interest turned again to the less hazardous game of baseball. Since 1886 this sport had been played with considerable success as an intercollegiate activity, and the faculty had come to give it grudging acceptance. The 1886 season, the first with a regularly scheduled slate of games, was hardly successful in respect to wins and losses. The baseball nine won but one of its four games, a 21-5 thrashing of Bucknell's club. The *College Monthly* of June 1886 explained that the Bucknellians had arrived in Gettysburg "somewhat dilapidated by their journey and did not play as strong a game as they can play." This was confirmed a week later in a return game at Lewisburg where an overconfident Gettysburg team bowed to Bucknell by an 11-10 score. As the *College Monthly* wryly remarked, "pride goeth before destruction." The remaining two games were lost to Dickinson 12-9 and 27-12. Of the second meeting, the *College Monthly* had but one brief comment: "the same old story with the error column somewhat crowded."

This unpromising beginning failed to daunt the college's young aspirants for athletic fame, and each spring for the next four years they took to the diamond again. In the four seasons, 1887-1890, the teams won seven, lost five, and tied one game. A Bucknell source states that the 1880s saw Bucknell, Penn State, Dickinson, and Gettysburg forming an intercollegiate baseball league.<sup>13</sup> While Gettysburg student publications report a number of Bucknell-Gettysburg baseball games in these years, not one of them mentions this baseball association.

Despite its long hold on undergraduate loyalty, by the 1890s baseball was losing ground to football in student interest throughout the country. A chronicler of American college life has written that "the baseball fever of the 'sixties was mild compared to the football psychosis which developed during the 'eighties and 'nineties."<sup>14</sup> But this mania did not seize upon Gettysburg undergraduates immediately. A writer in the 1893 *Spectrum* recalled that there existed a general lack of interest in football, but that "like all new things there were some to take hold of it." However, six years later the 1899 *Spectrum* retrospectively reported football emerging as a large

part of the renewed interest in athletics of all kinds. For example, the writer continued, "Our annual tennis tournament had its birth . . . the first public exhibition was given in the gymnasium by those proficient in tumbling, on parallel bars, etc.," and even this early "the project which has resulted in our beautiful athletic field was begun." The narrator added that the College authorities feared that all this might detract from class work, "and so rather binding rules were enforced."

Binding rules or not, football-minded students set about in 1890 instituting an intercollegiate football program. They managed to arrange for two games, the first with Millersville Normal at Gettysburg and the second with Franklin and Marshall<sup>15</sup> at Lancaster. Because no coach or experienced player was available, the players were thrown upon their own resources. Dr. Charles H. Huber '92 remembered fifty years later that many candidates for the team appeared at the initial practice session wearing derby hats. Coaching responsibilities devolved upon the player elected captain by his teammates, and in 1890 this was John J. Albert '92. Although another member of that team, Joseph L. Gensemer '92 recalled that "a Mr. Weller, from either Lafayette or Lehigh," appeared on campus to offer instruction, it was Albert who shouldered the onerous double duty of player-coach. For the most part, however, the players unwittingly adopted John Dewey's famous maxim, "learn by doing."

As might be expected, the fine points of the game were *terra incognita* to these young tyros. Stanley Billheimer '91 recalled that he and George Enders '93 "worked out an algebraic system of signs, in which each man had his letter and was told what to do by combinations." Understandably enough, the difficulties inherent in this system soon led to its abandonment. Lacking knowledge of the tricks of the game and "the vantage points overlooked," the team failed to achieve victory in either of its two contests.

The Millersville game, which inaugurated Gettysburg College's eighty-three years of intercollegiate football,<sup>16</sup> occurred on October 19, 1890. The game took place on the "prep field," that plot of ground occupied today by Hanson, Musselman, Patrick, and Huber Halls. Since the playing area was not enclosed, the "gate" consisted only of that which could be obtained by voluntary contributions from the 200 or so spectators present. Without any financial resources but their own, the players provided their own uniforms, which in the nature of things presented an interesting variety.

Some wore the standard leather jacket over a heavy woolen sweater, short knee pants of canvas, long stockings, and ordinary footwear. A few managed to obtain leather cleats for their shoes. Visored or small woolen skull caps provided some protection for their heads. As they gained more experience the players learned to wear their hair long, a practice followed elsewhere at the time. On September 21, 1898 the *Gettysburgian* issued a call for football candidates and made use of an atrocious pun. It noted that it was "the time to let the hair grow long, notwithstanding the wag who asserts that long hair is not essential to the game because it has no 'part' in it."

Despite the fact that the visiting eleven prevailed in that first encounter in 1890, the 1893 *Spectrum* described it as a contest between evenly matched teams. The final score of 6-4 might have been reversed, the writer claimed, "had it not been for an unfortunate fumble by one of our men." This account, however, did not include the behind-the-scenes story of this match, either because the writer was ignorant of certain details or because he decided they were not fit to print. Rev. Stanley Billheimer recalled more than sixty years later that originally the game was to have been played between Millersville Normal and the Gettysburg Preparatory Department team. However, when the teams took the field, the Gettysburg backfield was made up of college boys playing under assumed names, although the "rushers" were authentic "preps."<sup>17</sup> Under these circumstances victory, if attained, would have been tainted.

A month later Gettysburg's team traveled to Lancaster (*sans* the "Preps") to initiate a football rivalry with F. & M. that endured until 1958 and through sixty-one meetings on the gridiron.<sup>18</sup> After the two teams had ridden together by trolley out to McGrann's Park, they entertained a crowd of 500 spectators in what a Lancaster newspaper called "the most gentlemanly game of the season." The reporter wrote that "every man of the visiting team played not only foot-ball, but also played the part of a gentleman." Not everyone present saw it quite that way. When Gettysburg's eleven opened the game with an effective "flying wedge" a disgruntled F. & M. supporter reportedly exclaimed, "I thought these fellows came from a Christian College!"

It may be that the Gettysburg team permitted their gentlemanly instincts to get too much in the way of their athletic performance. The game was a mismatch and concluded with F. & M. triumphing by a 68-0 score. The 1893 *Spectrum*, looking back on

<sup>13</sup>Lewis E. Theiss, *Centennial History of Bucknell University, 1846-1946* (Lewisburg, 1946), p. 389.

<sup>14</sup>Earnest, pp. 220, 229.

<sup>15</sup>Gettysburg did not field an intercollegiate football team for the World War II years, 1943-1945.

<sup>17</sup>Robert Peeling, *Football at Gettysburg College (1890-1952)*. An unpublished senior history thesis, Gettysburg College, 1953.

<sup>18</sup>After an 18 year lapse Gettysburg and F. & M. renewed their rivalry in football in the fall of 1976.



it, admitted that "our boys did not expect to win the game from this celebrated team, but, nevertheless, they played a spirited game." The Lancastrians' edge proved too much to overcome: they possessed a decided weight advantage, were inspired by the hometown crowd, and unlike their guests, their players had seen and played the game of football before.

The seventeen young men who comprised the 1890 football squad and thus blazed the trail deserve the thanks of those who later built upon their achievements. As listed by the 1893 *Spectrum* they were:

**Rushers (Linemen):** C. S. Harter '91, G. W. Boyer '92, A. J. Rudisill '93, C. W. Walker '91, J. L. Gensemer '92, W. M. Vastine '93, and H. S. Dalrymple '94

**Quarterback:** Warren Nickel '94

**Halfbacks:** W. L. Smyser '91, F. V. Filbert '92, G. E. Hipsley '93

**Fullback:** J. J. Albert '92 (Captain)

**Substitutes:** S. Billheimer '91, F. Boyer '94, R. N. Hartman '91, J. C. Nicholas '94, and P. W. Koller '94

**Manager:** C. E. Filbert '92

Gettysburg's first intercollegiate football season ended, therefore, with the players gaining little more than valuable experience, which they undoubtedly sorely needed. The 1893 *Spectrum* took cognizance of the lack of victories and found five reasons for it: (1) the team had not been organized until late September; (2) no one on the squad really understood how to play the game; (3) no one realized the importance of physical exercises as a means of getting the players into proper shape; (4) no knowledge existed of proper diet: "The players ate what they pleased and as much as they pleased"; and (5) there existed no organized "second eleven" to test the "first eleven" adequately. However, these were shortcomings which experience and time could remedy.

What was of greater importance in this initial season was that Gettysburg's student athletes and their supporters had gained an understanding of what was involved in intercollegiate athletics. This would serve them well as they embarked on a more ambitious program in the coming years. They had learned something about managing such a program, made valuable contacts with students at other colleges, and had established a basis for a certain pride in their athletic accomplishments of their college.



*Gettysburg College's first varsity football team—1890.*

## The Years of Infancy, 1890-1900

GETTYSBURG COLLEGE'S intercollegiate athletic program in the early 1890s was a frail infant with uncertain prospects. A portion of the college community regarded it with apathy, and influential segments looked upon it with downright hostility. Dr. George S. Stahley, M.D., as befitted his professional training, may be said to have delivered the newborn child, the offspring of student interest and perseverance. Evidently, since over the signature of "G. D. S." he had in June 1888 employed the columns of the *College Monthly* to denounce football as a "barbarous game," he had had a change of heart. When in January 1893 the *Lutheran Observer* charged that such diversions promoted rowdiness and fostered all manner of evils on campuses, Dr. Stahley was quick to defend intercollegiate sports. Writing in the January 20 issue of that denominational journal, he admitted that athletics had gotten out of hand elsewhere, but he argued that at Gettysburg "abuses have been reduced to a minimum and the advantages carefully estimated and beneficially enjoyed." By now won over, the *College Monthly* for December 1893 saw positive benefits to be gained. It quoted "a high medical authority" to the effect that there existed

less idleness, less dissatisfaction, less brutality, less meanness and trickery, and a better physical condition among college students with foot-ball that *without* it—with out-door games than if their places were taken by compulsory calisthenics and gymnastics.

With the triumph of the proathletic over the antiathletic forces on the campus, it remained for the several intercollegiate athletic teams representing Gettysburg College to compete with reasonable success and acceptable honor. Otherwise, the winning of the struggle for intercollegiate sports at "Old Pen-sy" would have been a hollow victory indeed. No doubt the modest success enjoyed by the various teams during the nineties played a significant part in winning over skeptics.

Despite their strong reservations, the Gettysburg faculty acquiesced in a limited intercollegiate athletic program after 1890, although its self-appointed watchdog role led it to make every endeavor to control operations. This was due in part to the strong *in loco parentis* tradition which was particularly strong at this Lutheran institution, and it seemed wise to apply it with even greater force to the young men who ventured afield in search of athletic honors. Moreover, always there was need to satisfy, or at least mollify, those segments of the College's constituency which were skeptical of the educational value of such a program. Conservative alumni and doubtful faculty might be handled well enough, but captious clerics were something else again.

Meeting at York in the autumn of 1893, the West Pennsylvania Synod of the Lutheran Church drafted and forwarded to the Gettysburg board of trustees a statement protesting the introduction of intercollegiate sports at the College. Although their syntax was labored, their meaning was plain enough:

We are sorry to learn that the authorities of the College permit the students to engage in



Athletic Contests with the students of other institutions, traveling about the country, expending time and money. We fear that these contests are not only serious interruptions of study but also the occasion of great moral evils and will in the end injure the students and the efficiency and good name of the College. We rejoice in the position unanimously taken in this matter by the Faculty of the Theological Seminary at Gettysburg.<sup>19</sup>

Although the trustees received the Synod's demurrer and entered it in the minutes, there is no indication that at that time or later it took any official action on the matter.<sup>20</sup> Students, however, were not so reticent. The *College Mercury*, a publication wholly under student editorship, which had just appeared on the campus, charged in its November 1893 issue that the synodical spokesmen were hostile to modern improvements "which have brought this college abreast with the times, and not only to foot-ball." The writer underscored the contrasts he saw existing between football and "the sports or so-called sports" in which the old grads delighted when they were students:

The carrying of calves to the third and fourth stories of the dormitory and letting them jump out the windows, raids on farm-houses, and carrying away wagons, fodder, etc., . . . the blowing up of professors[!], and other puerile sports too numerous to mention [which] are below the dignity of the student of 1893.

Sarcasm from undergraduate sources apparently lost on them, the solemn ecclesiastics who were the moving force in synodical affairs continued to exert pressure to terminate intercollegiate sports at Gettysburg. When the seminary faculty barred seminarians from participating as members of the College's teams, student journalists bitterly denounced the Synod for its role. "The extremes to which some of the synods have gone," observed the *College Mercury* in its issue of November 1894, "drives us to wondering what sort of men they would have their ministers be."

When by 1895 neither the trustees nor the faculty had responded affirmatively to the Synod's urging, that body fired a final barrage. It recommended that intercollegiate sports be abandoned at Gettysburg as a means of bringing the institution "into harmony with the sober verdict of many of the

larger colleges of the land [a statement indicating how divorced from reality were these gentlemen of the cloth] . . . placing it in position to merit and receive solid honor and ever increasing patronage."

The editors of the *College Mercury*, disregarding the implied threat in these last words, responded with one of their own. In the November 1895 issue they warned that intercollegiate athletics were particularly needed at Gettysburg since "there is very little in the surroundings of the college to furnish amusement." Students, they argued, should be afforded "some opportunity to give expression to their excess of spirit." Moreover, insisted the writer, regrettable as it might seem to some not aware of the changing times, "it has become the almost universal custom among students to measure a college's reputation by its athletics."<sup>21</sup>

Official criticism on the part of the Synod seemingly subsided both in tempo and volume at this point, but always it was an inhibiting factor. It may be that the disquiet created by it strengthened the faculty's determination to exercise tighter supervision of the athletic program than it otherwise might have done.

In the 1890s the intercollegiate athletic program at Gettysburg was not only student-inspired but student-managed. Direct responsibility for its administration fell upon the Athletic Association, an organization which depended for finances largely on student membership fees and what it could realize from guarantees paid at away games and the gate at home. One of the tasks of the association was to select student managers for the various teams. Drawn from the student body, the managers faced formidable responsibilities. Their duties included the scheduling of games, organizing the teams, collecting and disbursing funds received, and acting as a liaison between the association and the faculty. Unlike the situation elsewhere, the management of the athletic program escaped alumni control; yet at Gettysburg the faculty was anything but indifferent. Minutes of faculty meetings throughout the 1890s reveal that body's concern early and late.

In November 1890, for example, the faculty hesitated to permit the football team to play F. & M. at Lancaster on Saturday the 22nd since it would be impossible for the students to return in time for Sunday church services. Only after team members pledged (figuratively on their knees, one of them re-

membered years later) to attend services in Lancaster was the journey permitted. A game scheduled with Swarthmore to be played at Harrisburg on Saturday, October 13, 1896 went on only after the faculty learned that the team could return by train "via Littlestown" that evening.

The professors also issued instructions as to appropriate opponents. On December 31, 1891 they decreed that "there shall be no contest games played except with student teams from regular schools and colleges," although seasonal records indicate that exceptions were permitted. In addition, the faculty only reluctantly allowed the manager to schedule games on holidays. In January 1896 the faculty voted to sanction a game on the following Decoration Day if the manager "can induce [Gettysburg's] Skelly Post G.A.R. to withdraw their objections." Two years later the faculty yielded to a request for a baseball game with Bucknell on Memorial Day if it would not conflict with the patriotic exercises. Evidence exists, however, that even here faculty defenses sometimes were breached, for the Thanksgiving Day football game tradition had its beginning during this period.

Constantly surfacing in the minutes of the faculty meetings were questions as to which students were eligible to participate in intercollegiate contests. In the 1890s, eligibility rules for college sports were either nonexistent or characterized by lax enforcement. So long as a student was matriculated at the College he could play any number of seasons. At some institutions even this rule was waived. At nearby Dickinson, law school students participated as members of the college teams and at Gettysburg, until barred by the seminary faculty, seminarians often defended the honor of the Orange and the Blue.<sup>22</sup> Even precocious youngsters from Gettysburg's Preparatory Department were welcome to compete for positions on the various teams. Gettysburg's first regular football coach, Dr. Henry Jump, remembered a traveling salesman "who matriculated at Gettysburg every afternoon for practice, playing with the scrubs, and then resuming his door-to-door ways."<sup>23</sup> The records do not reveal whether this part-time athlete's contributions to Gettysburg's football fortunes ever included appearance with the varsity for a game.

Since each college in those days determined its

<sup>19</sup>Trustee minutes, December 28, 1893. The seminary faculty's action to which the synodical statement referred was a prohibition set forth that no seminarian henceforth could participate as a member of the College's baseball or football teams.

<sup>20</sup>The nonaction of the Gettysburg trustees is in interesting contrast with that taken by the ruling bodies at two other Lutheran Colleges in Pennsylvania. At both Muhlenberg and Susquehanna the trustees denied students permission to engage in intercollegiate athletics, citing reasons similar to those advanced by the Synod. See Saul Sack, *History of Higher Education in Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, 1963), II, 723.

<sup>21</sup>Frederick Rudolph has written that "by 1900 the relationship between football and public relations had been firmly established and almost everywhere acknowledged as one of the sport's major justifications." See Rudolph, p. 385. Rudolph writes elsewhere (p. 378) that Alonzo Stagg, the famous football coach, believed that football had replaced "convivial drinking" as the major outlet for student extracurricular activity. For understandable reasons Gettysburg students did not advance this as justification for a football program.

<sup>22</sup>In the 1890's, college students made a practice of wearing soft and snug fitting caps woven with alternating stripes of the college's colors. Gettysburg's colors, canary, red, and blue, could not be woven by the looms then in existence. When an enterprising cap salesman reported that he had a stock of orange and blue caps on hand, the students voted unanimously to replace the tricolors with the new ones. See the account by Charles H. Huber '92 in Samuel G. Hefelbower's *History of Gettysburg College, 1832-1932* (Gettysburg, 1932), pp. 438-439.

<sup>23</sup>*Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 9, 1940.



own eligibility rules, at Gettysburg this logically was a faculty prerogative. On December 3, 1891 the faculty resolved that no student could compete in "contest games" without written permission from his parents or guardian. Some parents, apparently, were not in sympathy with intercollegiate athletics, so no doubt this rule frustrated many young aspirants to athletic honors. Charles H. Huber '92 hit upon a device to evade his father's interdict by playing under the alias of "Bitler." Years later Dr. Huber recalled that "Bitler" did quite well and got his name in the papers. "So my greatest obstacle that year was trying to describe Bitler to my dad, who was uncommonly curious about the fellow." Dr. Huber remembered that "towards the last I suspected that he knew and was having a little game of his own." (Could it be that this Lutheran clergyman father had no personal objections to the game but hesitated to offend his synodical brethren?) At times, yielding to pressure before a crucial game, the faculty allowed exceptions to its rule requiring parental permission. On September 30, 1893, it granted permission to John Byers '95 and Henry Clare '95 to play against Cornell but specified that the two students would need written permission from their parents for any future participation in "contest games."

The faculty also attempted to insure that participants did not allow their classroom obligations to be neglected. The formula hit upon was that no student who had not achieved a scholastic average of at least 75 per cent the preceding term and an overall average of 85 per cent for the preceding two terms could play. However, this regulation, like others, was eased at times. First year students could not be held to it, and the faculty minutes for September 17, 1897 reveal that sometimes circumstances altered cases. The minutes declared that

From students and local alumni considered the petition [which] sets forth the fact that the manager of the football team has arranged an advantageous schedule, but if certain students, who, on account of existing rules are ineligible, cannot become members of the team, the games cannot be played with credit. After discussion it was ordered that in consideration of pledges given by Nicholas, Stifel, and Lawyer (the ineligible) we agree to allow the 75% grade rule to be inoperative till after the first scheduled game, Sept. 25th.

The following year, however, the faculty gave up all attempts to hold to strict academic standards for participation in intercollegiate athletics at Gettysburg. As recorded in the faculty minutes for September 29, 1898, that body struck out the academic eligibility rule since it was "not producing the results anticipated." The minutes are silent as to whether the "results anticipated" were better performance in the classroom or on the playing field.

One additional proviso appeared in the athletic eligibility code formulated by the faculty. Each player had to satisfy Dr. Stahley, the Professor of Physical Culture, that he was physically fit to participate. In the earliest days, so Joseph L. Gensemer '92 remembered, when players were injured "we suffered in silence . . . bought our own liniment etc." He recalled also that "the varsity had a crutch in almost constant use." No doubt much of this self-administered therapy was designed to escape the watchful eye of Dr. Stahley, and the faculty thereupon placed on the shoulders of team managers the responsibility for reporting player injuries and disabled athletes.

So far as one can tell there was little connected with the athletic program which was outside the purview of the faculty. On May 21, 1896 the faculty considered a request from the baseball manager that "Mr. Burns of the Preparatory Department, a very valuable acquisition to the team as pitcher, be allowed free tuition and room rent." This matter the faculty very properly referred to the trustees, but it does disclose that "athletic scholarships" at Gettysburg College are not a recent creation.<sup>24</sup>

At times situations arose for which neither their rules nor their experience offered guidance to the faculty. During a visit by the Dickinson baseball team on June 3, 1891, someone lifted a portion of their equipment. The Dickinson team manager communicated this fact to President Harvey W. McKnight, and the next day, at a special meeting of the faculty, that body resolved that Dr. McKnight should "receive authority to settle the points in disagreement, and to draw upon the treasury for any amount necessary." The faculty minutes do not make known how this difficulty was resolved or whether the treasury to be tapped was that of the College or the Athletic Association.

The Athletic Association constantly faced two nagging problems which in many ways were interrelated: inadequate financial resources and the rather primitive athletic facilities. The College assumed no responsibility for defraying the expenses of the program. The association, therefore, had to draw on student membership fees, an entirely voluntary contribution. Student athletic enthusiasts had a habit of graduating, so as they departed from the campus responsibility for carrying on often fell into different and untried hands, not always with unalloyed success. The adoption of intercollegiate football, a much more expensive proposition than baseball, put a severe strain on the association's treasury.

The association was always scrambling for funds

and soliciting support through the columns of the campus publications. The *College Monthly* for March 1892 summarized the important function of the association in an attempt to enlist greater student and alumni support:

The Athletic Association bears the same relation to the physical college world that the professor does to the mental. It directs and furnishes the means for the upbuilding of the college through its athletic organizations. The college professor gives of his store of knowledge to add to the success of the student in mental work; the association gives of its pecuniary store to add to the success of the student in athletic work.

The Athletic Association is almost indispensable for the government and direction of sports in our modern college. . . . The college spirit, which in matters pertaining to college athletics should be paramount, . . . forms the basis of the association's work.

"If there is one thing sure," warned the *College Monthly* in October 1893, "it is that foot-ball cannot be carried on by faith and noise." Since foot-ball was expected to bring in funds sufficient to support not only its own program but that of baseball and other sports, this was an important consideration.

The crude and generally inadequate athletic facilities contributed to the financial difficulties. Until the construction of Nixon Field in 1896 it was impossible to prevent freeloaders from seeing the games without purchasing admission tickets. "Money was lost on every home game," lamented the *College Mercury* in January 1894, "not because we failed to draw large crowds, but because we could not get them to pay when they could see the games for nothing." Not only this, but the condition of the playing field, located on that plot of ground today bounded by Carlisle, Lincoln, Stevens, and Washington streets, left much to be desired. On wet fall days it quickly became a quagmire. Stanley Billheimer remembered seeing a visiting team—he thought likely it was Dickinson's—trudging up Carlisle Street to the hotel following a game since "we had no place to assign them to clean up and dress." The sight presented by the mud-bespattered and thoroughly soaked Carlisle lads led some townsfolk to exclaim scornfully, "If that's football!" The Gettysburg team looked much the same, but as its members dressed in their rooms on the campus, "they did not get into the public eye."

Such conditions not only limited the sale of tickets, but the almost cow-pasture nature of the playing field mortified loyal sons of the College. As early as April 9, 1891, the faculty took note of these difficulties and granted the Athletic Association "a plot west of the Boiler House running 500 ft. north and south and 350 ft. east and west."<sup>25</sup> It accompanied this grant with stipulations. The land could

<sup>24</sup>The practice of subsidizing promising athletes had become by the 1890's a common practice in many Pennsylvania colleges. Sack, II, 725.

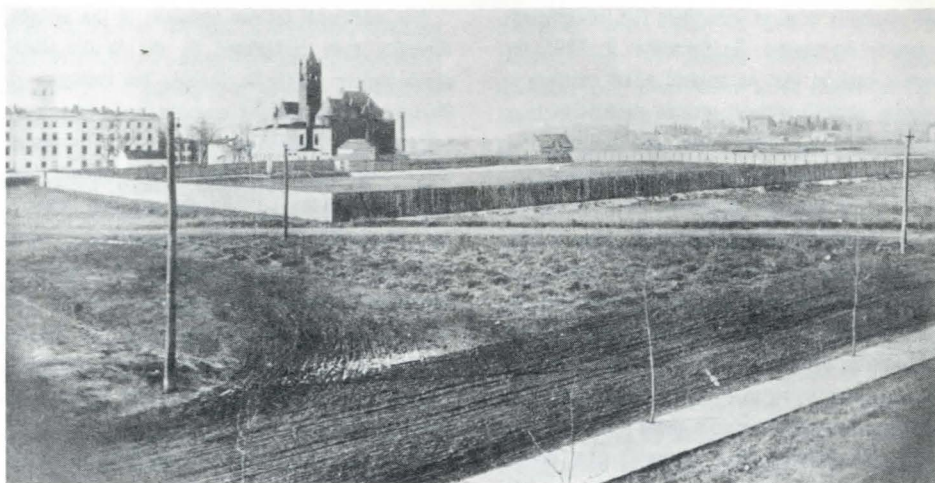


be used for athletic contests only so long as it was not required by the College for building purposes; its grade was not to be greatly altered; no fence was to be constructed around it or any other expense incurred in preparing the ground until the President of the College was satisfied that enough money was on hand to meet the expense; the area also should include facilities for tennis and all other athletic sports; and finally, the athletic program should be administered by "a committee of which the Professor of Physical Culture shall be chairman, and of which the other members shall be students elected by the Athletic Association, and three Alumni elected by the Alumni Association."

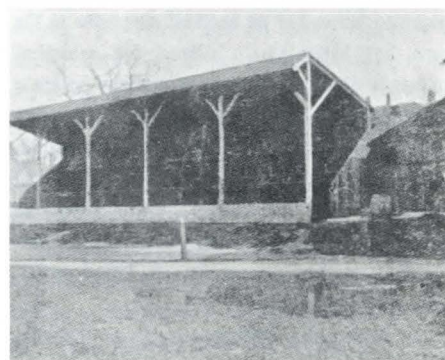
Thus encouraged, and with \$300 already on hand, students were galvanized into action. During the next five years both the *College Monthly* and the *College Mercury* opened their columns to frequent and fervent appeals to alumni and friends of the College. Typical was that which appeared in the *College Monthly* in December 1892. Noting that the "Athletic Field Fund," because of necessary expenditures, had dwindled to but \$100.29, the journal declared, "We need an Athletic Field and that soon." It followed this with a query, "Who will be the next to contribute?" A year later it asked, "Where are the Alumni who will aid in effecting this acquisition to Gettysburg College?" Yet, the required funds trickled in all too slowly. On April 21, 1893, Dr. Edward S. Breidenbaugh, whose designation as treasurer for the campaign may have lent it some needed status, reported that he had but \$201.29 on hand. In November 1894 the *College Mercury* tried another argument:

Our experience of the last few years has shown us conclusively that we cannot conduct a series of games on our present open grounds without running deeply into debt. And to play the greater number of games away from home, is very unsatisfactory to the team and to the student body. . . . Our records prove that our teams never play nearly so well away from home as on our own grounds. . . . Other Colleges have been able to secure such fields and so shall we.

Eventually the campaign bore fruit, and by the time the 1896 baseball season rolled around the diamond athletes had a respectable playing field for their games. This long-sought goal was achieved because of the arduous efforts of students, the willing support of the faculty, and a helpful promise of \$1,000 of College money made available by the



*Pictured above is Nixon Field, Gettysburg College's new gridiron facility in 1898. At right is the Nixon Field grandstand as it appeared in 1903.*



trustees "on the condition that ten alumni should act as security and that each student in College and Preparatory would pay to the College treasurer an athletic fee of fifty cents a term."

These conditions being met, Dr. Henry B. Nixon, Professor of Mathematics, agreed to lend his professional skills. He recruited his students in the task of laying out and constructing the new field. Work soon got under way and the *College Mercury*, with pardonable exultation, announced in November 1894 that "we have passed another important landmark in our onward course of advancement." Ere long, Dr. Breidenbaugh reported that \$1,773.99 had been expended, \$1,500 of which had been received from the college treasury.

There appears to have been no question as to the name for the new facility. The 1898 *Spectrum* gave full credit to Dr. Nixon and "his able corps of civil engineers." It reported that Nixon Field, when completed, had cost \$2,000 and described its 400 by 300 feet area as "sloping very gently to the north, just fall enough to carry off the surface water." Within the eight-foot high wooden fence which surrounded it a system of drains had been built to keep the area in playing condition. Located at the spot identified by today's Gettysburg students as "Stine Lake," it was at the time a cause for self-congratulation. Declared the 1898 *Spectrum*:

Nothing in the history of athletics at Gettysburg College has given more of an impetus to sports of all kinds than the completion of "Nixon Field." . . . It is situated directly north of the college, just outside of the campus proper. Old students will recognize the place under the names of "Gov.'s pasture," "the swamp," etc. It was indeed an unsightly spot and even those opposed to athletics, must concede that the nicely graded and enclosed field is a great improvement.

With one of the best athletic fields in the State, there is no reason why Gettysburg should not take its place among the first colleges in the country in athletics, as it has in all other departments.

While the new grounds, enclosed as they were, helped insure that spectators paid their way into the games, they did not automatically solve all financial problems. In the first place, managers faced the task of finding opponents attractive enough to induce spectators to pay the modest admission charge. Excepting Dickinson and F. & M., football elevens willing to play at Gettysburg for the nominal guarantee offered by the Athletic Association often were too obscure to draw a sufficient gate. Penn State and Penn, for obvious reasons, would not journey into the hinterlands for a game against Gettysburg. Gettysburg supporters wishing to cheer on their favorites against those prestigious elevens had to travel all the way to State College or Philadelphia.

<sup>251</sup> have been unable to determine the exact location of the "Boiler House" here mentioned. In November 1892, the *College Monthly* referred the new sports area as "a very desirable tract of land on the College Campus about 500 yards north of the Dormitory [i.e., Pennsylvania Hall]." Neither of these descriptions fits the plot eventually fixed for athletic purposes.



Nevertheless, Nixon Field served the purposes of the athletic program for three decades until the fall of 1925, when football activity was transferred to Memorial Field. Track meets continued to be staged there until after the second World War and the college baseball diamond was located there until the construction in 1954 of Stine Hall. Within a short time after its completion, Nixon Field provided a 1500-seat grandstand along the south sideline. Ere long, however, crowds at football games proved too large to be accommodated by the additional facility and older alumni will remember spectators moving up and down the sidelines following the progress of the ball in play.<sup>26</sup>

As the decade of the nineties came to an end, intercollegiate basketball arrived at Gettysburg. The transformation of Linnaean Hall into a gymnasium had been accomplished by 1890, and it required but a few adjustments to make of it an acceptable facility for this new sport. Thus, despite demurrers raised by carping clerics, intervention by a perhaps overconscientious faculty, a constant shortage of funds, and, for a time, an embarrassing want of adequate facilities, intercollegiate athletics had come to Gettysburg College to stay. Conceived in hope and born in struggle, the infant had survived. Athletically minded members of the college community had gained renewed confidence that this product of their vision and labor would continue to grow and bring honor to the College in the years ahead. This confidence, as we know, was not misplaced.

## Growing Pains, 1890-1900

WITH STUDENTS, faculty, alumni, and well-wishers of the College won over to an intercollegiate athletic program, there yet remained the task of achieving a degree of athletic competence and thereby gaining the respect of athletic rivals. The burden of this fell mainly on the football and baseball teams which, until late in the decade, practically had the stage to themselves. Not until the spring of 1895 were the first tentative steps taken to organize a track team, and the twentieth century arrived ere schedules were set up for intercollegiate basketball, tennis, and other minor sports.

In the years in question, baseball, the student's earliest love, enjoyed the greater prosperity as to victories over defeats. Over the ten seasons of

1890-1900, the baseball nines won thirty-eight games as against thirty setbacks. One game ended in a tie score. Thirty-two of the victories were gained at the expense of collegiate foes and the Gettysburgians trailed in twenty-seven games. Included in the opposition were teams representing Dickinson, F. & M., Bucknell (the three considered Gettysburg's closest rivals), Penn State, Mount Saint Mary's, Western Maryland, Susquehanna, Georgetown, Colgate, Bloomsburg Normal, University of Maryland, Ursinus, and New Windsor (later known as Blue Ridge College).

These cold statistics say nothing of the opportunities afforded baseball *aficionados* on the campus for hailing important victories and mourning depressing defeats. No doubt certain of the contests had features which impressed themselves on the memories of loyal Gettysburgians. In 1891, for example, the team's opening game shutout of a visiting Dickinson nine made them less than prepared for the 13-3 rout suffered by their favorites in the return game in Carlisle. It apparently did not take long for loyal supporters to find a way of explaining unexpected defeats. According to the 1893 *Spectrum*, Gettysburg took an injury-ridden and patched-up lineup into the second contest. In contrast, Dickinson had "her full nine in the pink of condition." The seasonal record also shows a 9-0 victory gained over a visiting Georgetown team. The *Spectrum* contributed a few details: "With Penna. [Gettysburg] at bat in the fifth inning, one man on

third, none out, and the score but 5-6 in their favor, the visitors left the field to save inevitable defeat, forfeiting the game to Penna." Very likely there was more to the incident than is here told, but a victory is a victory.

As the 1892 baseball season approached, optimism prevailed on the campus. "The base-ball boys have their new suits and present a fine appearance," declared the May issue of the *College Monthly*. Ever sanguine, the writer added that "they look like they can play ball and from the success already achieved, we can hope much." His great expectations were well-founded, for the team proceeded to win six of its seven scheduled games. Better yet was to come, for the 1893 aggregation achieved an undefeated season, sailing through its five-game schedule and outscoring its opponents 65-5, a truly impressive feat. When the 1894 nine won four of its six games, it appeared that winning baseball had become a habit at Gettysburg, one which no doubt the student body relished highly.

With the coming of the 1895 season, the *College Monthly* called for an appropriate college song which would inspire the baseball team to further success.

We should have one by all means. A good lively song would help our base-ball team in their games next term. . . . We believe . . . a college song . . . would be a great deal more encouraging and stimulating to the players than the guying and hooting at our opponents. It would at least savor a little more gentlemanliness and refinement.



*Gettysburg College's 1892 baseball team in the new uniforms.*

<sup>26</sup>Although referred to as "Nixon Field" from the time of its completion, not until June 13, 1922 did the trustees vote that "the College Athletic Field be officially named and known" by that name.



The annals of the time do not record any student summoning Euterpe to his aid and producing a proper song. Perhaps the lack of one explains why for the first time in several years defeats outnumbered victories for Gettysburg. Despite the five wins as against six losses, the team managed to win four of the seven games played against college foes. Gettysburg supporters could claim that their team was yet a power in collegiate circles.

Baseball fortunes declined again in 1896 with but three victories in the eight games played. In 1897, however, the team returned to its winning ways, capturing six of eight contests. Included in the victories were two heart-warming triumphs over Penn State. In the first game, played at State College, William B. Burns hurled a 3-0 shutout for Gettysburg. The brief notice of the game which appeared in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (May 16, 1897) reported that Gettysburg had used professional players as the battery. The *Gettysburgian*, taking note of this "mean falsehood," insisted that Burns and his catcher were bona fide students, and it warned all opponents that "they may expect to face Burns for a number of years as he expects to take the full course here, being a full-fledged Senior in our Preparatory Department."

It is worthy of note that Burns, although not yet enrolled as an undergraduate at Gettysburg, served not only as the team's star pitcher, but also as its captain. On March 9, 1897, the *Gettysburgian* had reported that he was putting baseball candidates through preseason practice. It may be doubted that the team would have elected him its captain had he been only a youthful schoolboy. (The *Alumni Record, 1832-1932* (p. 582) does not give Burn's birthdate.) Burns eventually matriculated at the College as a member of the Class of 1901 but left school in 1900 to embark on a professional baseball career.<sup>27</sup>

A further illustration of the ultra liberal interpretation of whatever eligibility rules were in effect in those days is the case of John B. McPherson '83. Seven years after he was graduated, McPherson returned to captain the 1890 and 1891 baseball teams. He was at the same time editor of the *Gettysburg Star and Sentinel* newspaper.

Despite the introduction of an "indoor cage" in the gymnasium and the promise of free sodas at "Doc" Musselman's drug store for each home run hit, the college's baseball fortunes sagged during the 1898 and 1899 seasons. During those two years

the team managed to win but seven of twenty-six games. However, the 1899 team unwittingly earned a distinction. On April 21 it pounded a Bucknell pitcher for eleven hits on the way to 12-7 victory. It is not likely that any Gettysburgian realized that the youthful hurler so roughly handled that day would go on to win baseball immortality as Christy Mathewson.<sup>28</sup>

What indoor cages and free sodas could not accomplish, perhaps the employment of a knowledgeable coach could. On February 14, 1900, the *Gettysburgian* announced that Frank S. Foreman, who, it reported, had formerly pitched for Cincinnati and would that summer hurl for the Baltimore team, would tutor the college nine for the first four weeks of the season. Foreman's instructions proved effective enough to enable the team to break even in its ten game schedule that year, including decisive and, no doubt, gratifying triumphs over both F. & M. and Dickinson.

While Gettysburg undergraduates had every reason to be proud of the success of their baseball heroes, before long they were captivated by football. Following the experimental games of 1890, Gettysburg's gridiron fortunes took a decided upturn with five victories recorded in the six games played during the 1891 season. A number of factors contributed to this success—the greater experience of the players, the creation of a "second eleven," and the institution of spring practice during the previous May. As the fall season began, a training table was established at which, under the watchful eye of Dr. Stahley, "the twenty odd candidates were subjected to the discipline of 'take sparingly.'" The wisdom of this last-named policy might be questioned, since the fifteen members of the 1891 football squad averaged but 165 pounds per man.<sup>29</sup> No doubt another reason for the team's success is that four of its wins came at the expense of teams which, like Gettysburg, were struggling to get a football program underway.

On October 3, 1891, Gettysburg College won its first intercollegiate football game in history (if we except the first encounter with Dickinson in 1879),

turning back the Lutheran Theological Seminary eleven by an 18-0 score. This hardly amounted to a real test, and the moment of truth came three weeks later against Penn State. The expected rout at the hands of the State College powerhouse failed to materialize since the final score was Penn State 18, Gettysburg 0. Football at Gettysburg was fast coming of age. Very properly the *College Monthly* report of the contest centered attention on Captain Hipsley's impressive 50-yard run and Koller's "beautiful" defensive play. The team next demolished Western Maryland twice, 64-0 and 98-0, routed Mount Saint Mary's 62-6, and, apparently making a habit of feasting on Marylanders, laced a Hagerstown town team 50-0 in the season finale.

The success of the 1891 football team inspired Gettysburg supporters with understandable enthusiasm as the 1892 season got underway. "Football is all the go now," declared October's *College Monthly*, and it added that "the management is using every endeavor to place a creditable first eleven in the field." One of these endeavors was the hiring of a coach, Dr. Henry Jump, who had, according to the word which preceded his arrival, "banged around with the University of Pennsylvania's moleskin heroes and understood the fine points of outdoor mayhem." Under Jump's tutelage the 1892 eleven won two games and lost two. Doubtless, the highlight of the season came on October 15 when the Gettysburg lads repulsed a visiting Dickinson team 18-6; and, as the 1894 *Spectrum* put it, "the victory was celebrated as was victory never celebrated before."

A second game with Dickinson at Carlisle on November 1 left a sour taste, not only because the Dickinsonians won 14-0, but because Gettysburgians believed they had ample reason to cry "foull" According to the December *College Monthly*, clearly not the most unbiased witness,

When our boys arrived upon the field they found, instead of the [Dickinson] College eleven . . . a "stuffed eleven," made up of four of the players who played against them in the first game, a former Gettysburg butcher, a Hanover sport, a Carlisle Indian and other foreign material not catalogued. . . . The eventual loss of the promised guarantee . . . had our team refused to play, forced our management to assent to a contest. . . . Our students do not recognize the defeat as having been administered by Dickinson, but continue to maintain the superiority of Gettysburg as evidenced in the score of the first game when both were college teams.

Even the truncated 1892 schedule had proven that football was an increasingly expensive business. The 1891 football season saw the Athletic Association expending a total of \$110.50, and in 1892 expenses had risen to \$310.07, almost a three-fold

<sup>27</sup>The Major League official record lists a "Wm. Burns," born at Hagerstown, Maryland, who appeared as a pinch hitter for the Baltimore American League Baseball team in 1902. He got a hit in his only time at bat and thus registered a lifetime major league batting average of 1.000. See Hy Turkin and S. G. Thompson, eds., *The Official Encyclopedia of Baseball* (New York, 1956), p. 92.

<sup>28</sup>The *Gettysburg Times* of October 9, 1925, reporting Mathewson's death, quoted Eddie Plank, Gettysburg's own baseball demi-god, as saying that he and Mathewson pitched against each other as collegians. The records of that time are imperfect and it is barely possible that they did oppose each other then, but I have been unable to uncover conclusive evidence that they did. Plank and Mathewson did face each other in two World Series (1905 and 1913) in three games, two of which Mathewson won with Plank the winner in the other. In 1911, Mathewson's New York Giants and Plank's Philadelphia Athletics met for the World Championship, but the two pitchers never opposed each other in this series.

<sup>29</sup>The "weight chart" published in the *College Monthly* in December 1891 revealed that William M. Vastine '93 was at 206 pounds the heaviest man on the squad with Charles H. Huber '92 the lightest man at 137 pounds.





Gettysburg's first winning football team—the 1891 squad.

increase. Nevertheless, students undertook to prepare for an eight-game slate in 1893, and in the spring of that year the *College Mercury* reported that spring practice was being carried on more systematically with the players "running, kicking, falling on and catching the ball." The work, the writer assured his readers, was required "so that we can devote more time in the fall to perfecting term [team?] work."

Although Coach Jump's boys lost the opening game in 1893, they had no reason for shame. Gettysburg surprised and extended a much heavier and more experienced Cornell eleven before bowing by a 16-0 score. The second game, however, played against Penn at Philadelphia, was a disaster. Forced to play without three key men, seminarians barred by the seminary faculty from participation, Gettysburg's defenses crumbled, and Penn ran up a 74-0 score. Nevertheless, the 1893 season was not without its brighter intervals. The team defeated Dickinson twice, 24-12 and 4-0, and at Lancaster F. & M. managed to tie the Gettysburgians 4-4 only because of "a fluke and a palpable forward pass which the referee failed to see."<sup>30</sup> A thrilling second half rally gained an 18-16 win over Washington and Jefferson in a game played at Harrisburg. A Harrisburg newspaper attributed the final result to interference on the part of an unruly pro-Gettysburg crowd of spectators, an accusation indignantly rejected by the 1895 *Spectrum*.

<sup>30</sup>This, at least, was the version carried by the 1895 *Spectrum*. The forward pass did not become legal in football until 1906.

Intercollegiate football had by now not only won the favor of Gettysburg undergraduates, but the faculty appears to have become more reconciled. This happy development came despite the growing financial outlay required. In March 1894, the *College Mercury* reported that receipts for the 1893 season had totaled \$1,114.53 but that expenses amounted to \$1,144.76. In the perspective of the 1970s, with mounting deficits threatening the continuance of intercollegiate football on many campuses, the thirty dollar minus may appear trivial. Yet, many thoughtful persons likely raised questions as to the wisdom of maintaining the luxury of "contest games" at Gettysburg College. Nevertheless, the 1895 *Spectrum* no doubt spoke truthfully when it declared that "as each recurring season comes around it [football] is the all-absorbing topic."

The four game 1894 season was short but hardly sweet for Gettysburg supporters. The team won but one game, a 16-0 triumph over Dickinson, but that win helped save the season. A measure of the Gettysburg-Dickinson rivalry building up is seen in the *College Mercury* observation in November that "the particular games around which all interest centers in foot-ball and base-ball are the games with Dickinson." Therefore, the writer was but half facetious when he wrote that this victory was "a great national event" and equal in importance to "the great battle fought here a few decades ago." He passed on the perhaps apochryphal story that President George Edward Reed of Dickinson had warned Dickinson students that unless they managed to defeat Gettysburg, serious consideration

would be given to abandoning the gridiron sport at the Carlisle institution. Fortunately for both colleges, such Draconian measures were not adopted, perhaps because the two schools did not meet on the football field again until 1898.<sup>31</sup> Second only to the rivalry with Dickinson was that established with F. & M. Thus, the 28-22 loss at Lancaster in 1894 was a bitter pill, particularly the manner of it. According to the December *College Monthly*, a blocked Gettysburg kick rolled under a nearby carriage on the sidelines from which an enemy player retrieved the ball to score the winning touchdown.

Perhaps the less said of the 1895 season the better. The only triumph in six games was a gratifying 12-4 win over F. & M. at Gettysburg. However, the victory gave birth to a tradition which endured for many years on the Gettysburg campus—for the first time students climbed the steps of Glatfelter Hall's tower and rang the bell to signal the victory.

In the fall of 1896, J. W. Best replaced Dr. Jump in tutoring the Gettysburg eleven.<sup>32</sup> The schedule called for the season to open with three games in one week, all on foreign fields, against Penn State, Penn, and F. & M. in succession. Without doubt the new coach had his work cut out for him. The team proved unequal to these formidable demands and lost all three games by decisive scores, 40-0 to Penn State, 32-0 against Penn, and 24-0 in the game with F. & M. Then came a welcome turnabout and victory was achieved in all of the remaining six games. Included in them was a 10-0 shutout of the visiting F. & M. team, the same which had humbled Gettysburg earlier that season at Lancaster. The boys from Lancaster did not accept this defeat with much grace. The *College Monthly* in November reprinted the bitter complaint which had appeared in the F. & M. student weekly:

Our team made an obstinate stand and a brave fight against G. College as a whole. . . . The 'Varsity was a constant mark of offensive derision and extreme disrespect at the hands of many spectators and substitutes on the sidelines. . . .

<sup>31</sup>The lack of a Gettysburg-Dickinson gridiron confrontation from 1895-1897 apparently did not abate their heated rivalry. In 1895 Dickinson students traveled *en masse* to Harrisburg to cheer on a Bucknell eleven against Gettysburg, an incident which led the *College Monthly* to jeer that this had provided Dickinsonians with their only chance that year to cheer for a winning team. The next year when Gettysburg met Swarthmore at Harrisburg the Carlisle students repeated their 1895 performance.

<sup>32</sup>There exists some confusion as to Best's antecedents. Both local newspapers, the *Star and Sentinel* of September 29 and the *Compiler* of October 6 refer to him as "Coach Best of Yale!" But the *College Mercury* in October reported that he had played "left end and rusher on the Lehigh University team for several years." The Yale Alumni Records Office has stated (October 28, 1975) that it has no record of a "Best" playing or coaching at Yale. Joe Whittenour, Sports Information Director at Lehigh, wrote on April 8, 1976 that a "J. W. Best" is listed among Lehigh lettermen in football for 1893 and 1894. However, he is not listed in the Lehigh University Alumni Directory. In view of the relaxed eligibility rules which prevailed in those days, Best may have played football at both universities without ever enrolling as a student.



Gettysburg played a game which was characterized by holding, slugging, and off-side playing. We condemn the reckless spirit which will resort to indecent and unsportsmanlike methods to accomplish its end.

Gettysburgians naturally bristled. The *College Monthly* writer replied that the game official was "Mr. Kump . . . a conscientious and upright man," who, as a student at the Theological Seminary, could not have done other than fairly officiate the game. He apparently thought it beside the point to note that the official, William A. Kump, '95 had played on the Gettysburg team in 1891 and against F. & M. in 1892. About all this exchange demonstrated was that then, as now, opposing football partisans are prone to see occurrences through different spectacles.

In reviewing the successful 1896 football season the 1898 *Spectrum* credited it in large measure to the efforts of Coach Best, suggesting that "the value of a coach has been clearly demonstrated." But for some reason Best decided not to accept reappointment in 1897, and despite the strenuous efforts of the student manager, Charles J. Fite '98, no qualified coach would come for what the Athletic Association was prepared to pay. In the 1890s, football coaches at Gettysburg came and went with disturbing frequency. Their compensation was provided by the Athletic Association and the figure was always negotiable. This meant that those who came accepted often niggardly remuneration from sheer love of the game and loyalty to their players. Not being members of the faculty and with no claim to tenure, each of them earned the greater portion of his bread at some other pursuit.

At times, it would seem, the coaches' responsibilities extended beyond mere coaching. In the fall of 1892, the opening kickoff of a game played at Steelton against a town team was delayed because no official showed up. Since no one else present seemed qualified by knowledge and experience, Coach Jump was pressed into service. It may be hypercritical to suggest that the college eleven's 20-0 victory was due in any way to Jump's officiating. Years later, however, he remembered that "I measured the distance for downs with my cane, and if there were any slight shortages—well, you can understand how one might be handicapped with no more than a walking stick."<sup>33</sup>

The failure to find a suitable coach for the 1897 season meant that responsibility for preparing the team for its nine-game schedule fell once more on the shoulders of the team's captain. This year that post was filled by David Dale '00, but not until the

fifth game was he able to put a winning combination on the gridiron. The team lost five of the seven games played,<sup>34</sup> and the *Gettysburgian* on December 8, 1897 again pled for the appointment of a permanent coach, noting that "defeat is not pleasant; it is depressing." The journal recommended an increase in the student athletic fee (then fifty cents a term) as a means of funding such an appointment.

About the only thing that saved the season was that, as Manager Fite reported, the Athletic Association had cleared \$127.76 above expenses. No doubt this net profit was due in part to the fact that with no coach no coach's salary needed to be paid. Some consolation, also, was derived from the *Philadelphia Record's* account of the Penn-Gettysburg game which stated that "no more gentlemanly set of players ever contested on Franklin Field than the Gettysburg eleven."<sup>35</sup> This was minor compensation but it was something.

The approach of the 1898 football season brought news that Howard C. Johnson, a former West Chester and Penn player, would coach the team. So optimistic were the students at this development that at a mass meeting they voted to accept a Dickinson offer for renewal of athletic relations which, the *Gettysburgian* was convinced, "will be a benefit to both colleges." Negotiations between representatives of the faculties and students of both colleges followed, and on November 9, 1898 the *Gettysburgian* was pleased to announce an agreement reached. The pact called for a football game, two baseball games, and a dual track meet each season for the next three years. It stipulated further that "all members of the teams shall be bona fide students of the collegiate, law, or theological departments of our respective institutions."<sup>36</sup> Some Gettysburgians a few weeks later may have had second thoughts regarding this *détente* when the Carlisle eleven celebrated the renewal of the gridiron rivalry by trouncing an out-manned visiting Gettysburg team by a 44-0 score.

Gettysburg's team managed to win but one of its first five games in 1898, playing the role of sacrificial lamb for Penn State (47-0) and Penn (50-0) before topping Lebanon Valley 10-0 in the third outing. Especially disheartening was the 26-0 loss to F. & M. In the sixth game the team ran roughshod 116-0 over a hapless town team from Gettysburg, but this hardly compensated for the sorry record

which preceded it. It may be that this farce was too much for Coach Johnson, for he took his departure from the campus immediately afterwards. This boded ill for the team's fortunes for the remaining four games (which included the unfortunate affair at Carlisle); but despite the fact that once more the players were thrown upon their own resources, they managed to win two more games ere the season ended.

In the inherent optimism of youth hope springs eternal. Since Coach Johnson was expected to return for the 1899 season, expectations for football success arose again. Only two positions on the first eleven would need to be filled with inexperienced men. Once again, however, the expected coach failed to appear. Therefore, when the coachless eleven held the formidable Carlisle Indians to a 20-0 score in the opening game, it was an occasion for modest self-congratulation. "If our team can do such work without a coach," the *Gettysburgian* observed, "surely we can do better with one." To the writers of this journal the lack of a coach was still unacceptable.

The need for an experienced hand at the helm was even more evident in the 40-0 shellacking which the team suffered at the hands of Penn State in the second game. At this juncture a rescue was effected in the arrival of M. D. "Doc" Ritchie. Ritchie had the previous fall coached F. & M. to its 26-0 win over Gettysburg, and as the 1899 season began he was coaching at Ohio Wesleyan. In some manner he was induced to take charge at Gettysburg, and under his direction the team won four of its remaining seven games. Included among these victories was an appreciated 11-5 win over Dickinson, the date of which the *Gettysburgian* thought should be written "with big letters in red ink in the books of Pennsylvania College that future generations may read." A dispute over officials led to a last minute cancellation of the F. & M. game, an action which the 1901 *Spectrum* declared was for no other reason than the Lancastrians' fear of certain defeat.

In the years 1890-1899, Gettysburg College's football teams won twenty-nine games and lost thirty-three. Two games ended in tie scores. It should be kept in mind, however, that fifteen of the losses came at the hands of such perennial powerhouses as Penn State, Penn, and the Carlisle Indians. Against their sister colleges—Dickinson and F. & M.—the ten years had seen eight victories as against six defeats with one tie recorded. Altogether, from the standpoint of wins and losses, this initial decade of intercollegiate football could have turned out much worse.

Perhaps equally gratifying for Gettysburgians was the fact that at long last "Old Pennsy" had become an active participant in the national mania, intercollegiate football. Not everyone on the Get-

<sup>34</sup>Two of the games scheduled were cancelled, a not infrequent occurrence in those early years.

<sup>35</sup>Cited in the *Gettysburg Compiler*, September 12, 1897.

<sup>36</sup>The complete text of this agreement, duly signed by faculty and student representatives of the two colleges, may be found in the *Gettysburgian* of December 7, 1898.

<sup>33</sup>Cited in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 9, 1940.



tysburg campus fell victim to the hysteria; the constant appeals in student publications for student body support and more vigorous manifestations of the "Old Gettysburg Spirit" attests to that fact. Yet most Gettysburg undergraduates conformed to the aspirations and values of their generation.

Although what might be recognized as track and field athletics had existed in rudimentary form on the Gettysburg campus for some years, not until the late 1890s did they take on an organized intercollegiate character. The 1899 *Spectrum* is our authority for the story that "walking contests" were staged as early as 1879, and in that year a "Walking Championship Belt" was awarded to Harry D. Withers '81 for his feat in traveling by "shanks mare" a distance of ten miles. Second prize went to Emory L. Loudon '81 for his eight-mile hike, while Louis F. Shindel '80 earned a large leathern medal "for having been the first to fall out of the contest."

In June 1893, one student remembered forty years later, further efforts were made to stage running contests of some kind. "I recall 'Senny' Keefer 'tearin' down' the 100 yd. & 200 yd. stretch & hurdling in the contest which I believe was in front of the west entrance of Old Dorm," wrote Charles J. Fite '98.<sup>37</sup>

As he recalled it, the race course ran "along the road between the Gymnasium Bldg. & Dorm, on the south side of the road on the grass of the campus." Such athletic endeavors were strictly intramural in kind and served primarily as an outlet for the surplus youthful energies stored up over the long winter months.

Gettysburg students lagged far behind those on other campuses in respect to track. Organized track meets had begun as early as 1872 at Yale,<sup>38</sup> and other colleges soon took up the sport. In 1894 an attempt had been made to organize a track and field competition on a more systematic basis at Gettysburg, but as the *College Monthly* of October 1895 plaintively reported, "for some unaccountable reason it was dropped and we lost probably that which we might have gained."

In the spring of 1895, interested students made another try at track, formed a mile relay team, and entered it at the Penn Relays in Philadelphia. In a four-team race which included quartets representing St. Johns College of Annapolis, Swarthmore, and



*Football casualties, aftermath of a hard game in the 1890s as seen by J.F.W. Kitzmeyer '90.*

Western Pennsylvania College (known today as the University of Pittsburgh), the Gettysburg runners managed to place third. No track activity is on record for 1896, but the following spring Gettysburg hopefuls made another try at gaining track honors at Philadelphia.

As had been the case with baseball and much of the time with football, no coach or trainer was available in 1897 to tutor the Gettysburg "thin-clads." Coveted membership on the relay team, therefore, was decided through general and informal competition. Fite recollected the circumstances which led to his being selected for the team. He had won his race in the interclass meet and

The college boys urged me to enter the 440-yd. dash event which would decide who would represent the College on the Relay Team to go to Phila., to the U. of Pa. Relay Races two weeks later. I followed around the race track on Nixon Field on the heels of Capt. Erb and was glad to go to "Philly" later. We had a close interesting contest that day. We four runners each got a silver cup.<sup>39</sup>

The silver cup received was for placing second in the race which included runners from Bucknell (the winners), Dickinson, and F. & M. Besides Fite, the other members of the team were Charles L. B. Erb '97, who served as the captain, Harvey F. Grazier '98, and William C. Ney '02.

The team's showing at Philadelphia inspired a second try the following year. "It is certainly gratifying," observed the *Gettysburgian* of January 16, 1898, "to see the number of candidates who are trying for the track team." Captain Erb had been graduated, but Fite, Grazier, and Ney were on hand,

and competition for the fourth man soon got underway. The successful contestant was David Dale '00, captain of the football team the previous fall. However, on April 28, both Fite and Dale responded to President William McKinley's call for volunteers to enlist in the war against Spain. Since Grazier became ill, Gettysburg entered no team at Philadelphia that year.

In accordance with the agreement made with Dickinson for a dual track meet each spring, attempts to organize a full track and field team were launched early in 1899. Not without some fits and starts did the enterprise get underway. On April 12 the *Gettysburgian* announced that a resident of the town, William F. Dill, "a Harvard man . . . who has done a great deal of work in both baseball and track," had agreed to help out with both spring sports at the College. At the same time, the journal took note of the chilling indifference with which students were responding to the call for track candidates. Only a week before the scheduled May 16th meet with Dickinson on Nixon Field, the paper suggested that unless more men reported for the team the meet should be cancelled.

Either the *Gettysburgian* suggestion or some other compelling force spurred the students into action, for on the day appointed a Gettysburg track team appeared. Lacking sufficient preparation, the Gettysburgians went down to an overwhelming defeat by a 60-28 score. The invading Dickinsonians captured nine of eleven first places, leaving the home team victory in but one and a tie for first place in another. Gettysburg's lone victor was Jesse S. Koller '00, who covered the 220-yard hurdles ahead of the field in 29.5 seconds. Henry Albers '99 earned a tie in the high jump with a leap of 5 feet 4 inches. The twelfth scheduled event, the broad jump, was halted "by a terrific shower." As unpropitious as

<sup>37</sup>Charles J. Fite to Robert Fortenbaugh, March 31, 1931. Fite's letter of reminiscence is deposited in the Gettysburgiana Room of the Gettysburg College Library. William B. Keefer was a member of the class of 1895. He may have been the "Sonny Kiefer, scion of a state senator," whom Dr. Henry Jump remembered as his best back in football in the 1890s. See the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 9, 1940.

<sup>38</sup>Allan Nevins, *The Emergence of Modern America* (New York, 1927), p. 223.

<sup>39</sup>Fite to Robert Fortenbaugh, March 31, 1931.



was this beginning in dual track competition, a start had been made. As the *Gettysburgian* saw it, the experience "has given track athletes here just the impetus that has been needed so long."

On September 17, 1898 the *Gettysburgian* reported that an unnamed freshman incredibly had refused to join one of the two literary societies on the campus. The youthful nonconformist had given as his reasons for this unprecedented action that he was leaving the College "which has no standing at all." The journal responded by pointing to the many Lutheran Church leaders who were Gettysburg products, but it admitted that the freshman's erroneous notion stemmed from two factors—the temporary lack of athletic success and "the fact that we do not keep ourselves well enough before the college world." For some time students had argued that the two matters were interrelated. Nonetheless, the fortunes of the several teams in the 1890s had taught Gettysburg's rivals, particularly her sister colleges, that a victory over the Orange and Blue was a matter for pride while a defeat at Gettysburg's hands was not necessarily a reason to feel disgraced.

## Cutting the Apron Strings, 1900-1910

THE TURN of the century found intercollegiate athletics more or less firmly established on the Gettysburg campus. The baseball team was enjoying gratifying success, and both the track and tennis teams were showing signs of life. In the winter of 1900-1901 basketball shouldered its way onto the scene. But it was football that increasingly captivated student minds. "Again the season for the greatest of college games is at hand," proclaimed the *Gettysburgian* early in September 1900. The writer attributed the increased enrollment of the incoming freshman class "to our success in football and other athletic sports during the last year."

Word that Coach Ritchie would return to guide the football team through its ambitious ten-game schedule inspired optimism. But later news that the popular and successful coach was ill and would not be available created considerable disappointment. The burden of readying the "Varisty Eleven" (the first time student publications at Gettysburg used this term) fell on the shoulders of David Dale, captain of the 1899 team. Dale delayed his matriculation at the University of Pennsylvania Medical School to work with the football candidates, but in late September Byron W. Dickson arrived to relieve him.



*Silver Cup winners at the 1897 Penn Relays were, left to right, Harvey Grazier '98, Charles Erb '97, William Ney '02 and Charles Fite '98.*

A Penn All-American, "By" Dickson had been sought for some time to fill the coaching position at Gettysburg. What induced him to accept the assignment is not known. Faculty minutes for September 20, 1900 disclosed that "Mr. Dixon [sic], the foot-ball coach, is allowed to room in No. 13 West End."<sup>40</sup> That this privilege was the decisive factor which persuaded Dickson to come to Gettysburg may be doubted, but the faculty's concession represented something of a vote of confidence in him. The faculty tended to regard coaches and professional athletes with some reservation, and it felt compelled to supervise the coaches' contacts with undergraduates as closely as possible. In 1896, for example, the faculty granted Coach Best permission "to room in the dormitory . . . with the strict understanding that Mr. Best shall prove himself altogether unobjectionable as to his conduct and influence among the students."<sup>41</sup>

Continuing the practice of the previous decade, the faculty in the early 1900s attempted to hold a tight rein over the intercollegiate athletic program.

Faculty meetings often were given over to passing resolutions, issuing injunctions, and spelling out directives for the guidance of student managers and players. The degree of intervention provided for by faculty legislation would hardly be tolerated by the present generation of undergraduates. No doubt those students who had to shoulder responsibility for conducting and financing the athletic program found faculty interference particularly galling. Often but one recourse seemed to many students open to them—evade every possible opportunity the rules and regulations set forth by the faculty. As a consequence, as faculty minutes make clear, the professors spent considerable time acting in the interest of maintaining "disipline," to use Dr. Stahley's spelling. A considerable proportion of student disregard of faculty rules involved the athletic program.

In the beginning, the board of trustees had been content to hand down directives of general policy but leave to the faculty the task of detailed implementation. On June 14, 1898, however, the trustees instructed the Finance Committee of the Faculty "to prepare and submit an outline for the guidance of the Athletic Association," such to be presented at the January 1899 meeting of the trustees. At that meeting they received the faculty committee's "exhaustive report" and, following the time-honored practice, referred it to a committee. This committee's deliberations led to the establishment of an Athletic Council vested with direct control of the athletic

<sup>40</sup>For many years the recording secretary of the faculty, Dr. George D. Stahley, had trouble with the spelling of the proper names he recorded in the minutes of faculty meetings.

<sup>41</sup>Faculty minutes, September 15, 1896. In view of the fact that the faculty minutes in those days contain innumerable references to action taken against students who absented themselves from chapel, made unauthorized trips to nearby towns, and even were detected habituating grog shops, the faculty might have evinced some concern lest the students corrupt Coach Best.



program. The twelve-member Council included three faculty members, four students (one from each class elected by his classmates), three alumni from the town, including a representative of the Seminary, the president of the student athletic association, and a Preparatory Department student. Among the powers exercised by the Council were the handling of game receipts and expenditures, the reviewing of the schedules arranged, with the right to cancel games when thought necessary, the selection and removal of team managers, and the general authority "to interpret these rules and formulate such details as are necessary to carry out their spirit."<sup>42</sup>

Although the faculty no longer dictated athletic policy, this arrangement did not keep it from kibitzing on all occasions. For example, it could still specify, as it did on January 17, 1901, that games with Dickinson or the Carlisle Indians "shall not be played on either a holiday or a Saturday." The faculty minutes characteristically do not reveal the reasoning behind this interdict, but probably it was to prevent a mass exodus from the campus on such occasions. Sometimes the faculty permitted managers a degree of latitude. Faculty minutes for November 17, 1901, for example, cite faculty permission granted to the basketball manager "to schedule a game with a non-college team in Harrisburg some time in Feb." In April 1903, the football manager sought permission to arrange a game with a Steelton town team the following autumn. The faculty acquiesced but, no doubt innocent of any thought of snobbery, did so "because the majority of the Steelton team are college men."

Faculty control extended also to the number of players allowed to travel abroad for games. On April 12, 1906, a faculty decree set the number of football substitutes for away games at three and baseball substitutes at two. If the respective team's managers also were players, each of them was included in this figure. And yet, here too the faculty sometimes relented, particularly under compelling circumstances. On October 2, 1906, the faculty ruled that "Inasmuch as the game with the U. of P. tomorrow is of unusual importance, 4 substitutes are allowed instead of three." Later that year the manager received permission to take fourteen men to Reading for a game against Ursinus and to include eighteen men in the traveling squad against Bucknell at Lewisburg.<sup>43</sup> In 1907 the football manager ob-

tained faculty sanction for eighteen men to travel to Philadelphia to face Penn and subsequently, throwing discretion to the winds, the faculty ruled that the manager could take twenty men on trips whenever he deemed it necessary.

Very likely these restrictions arose from faculty concern for classes missed. The professors made every effort to guard against unnecessary and undue absences on the part of student athletes. They realized that athletes necessarily would be away from the campus even while classes were in session, but they tried to place some limits on the privilege of class cuts. On February 28, 1901, the faculty voted to permit football players additional absences "next fall in order to lengthen the Southern trip," but in January 1903, it drew the line, ordering "that the Athletic Committee be instructed that hereafter the absence of either foot-ball or base-ball must in no case exceed fifteen periods for the season."<sup>44</sup>

Invariably, whenever Gettysburg met her old rivals, Dickinson and F. & M., on their grounds, students clamored for permission to accompany the team. Although such occasions meant that class attendance would be affected, the faculty found it difficult to resist student pleas. Illustrative of the type of pressure brought is a lengthy entry dated November 20, 1901 in the faculty minutes:

Coach Smith and Captain Young of the football team appeared before the Faculty with the request that the students be permitted to accompany the team to Lancaster on Thanksgiving Day. . . . Resolved, that in view of the earnest request of Coach Smith and our confidence in him, we will allow such students to go to Lancaster . . . as get permission from home and give their personal and written pledge of correct conduct—and we rely on the promise of Coach Smith, Captain Young, and [Manager] Fleck to report any violation of such pledge. Resolved 2nd, that this action is intended as a special compliment to Coach Smith and is not to be recognized as a precedent [sic].

The students apparently lived up to their pledges, for the faculty granted the same permission under the same conditions for each of the next four years. However, in 1906 it withheld this permission "in view of the abuse of the privilege last year." No faculty action is on record on this matter in 1907, but in 1908 students again were allowed to travel to Lancaster for the F. & M. game on Thanksgiving Day. The following autumn, assuming now that students were responsible persons up to a point, the

faculty on October 27, 1909 declared a general holiday for the Saturday of the game against Dickinson at Carlisle. It is hardly likely that students would have been granted such a concession ten years earlier.

All this indicated that even at staid Pennsylvania College the faculty would bow to the winds of change. These winds indicated that at Gettysburg, as in the nation at large, student excitement with intercollegiate athletics was taking on larger dimensions. "The decline of literary interest," confessed the 1907 *Spectrum*, "has centered attention of all upon the field and the gymnasium." Although other sports attracted Gettysburg undergraduates, football still remained, as was the case throughout the land, the number one intercollegiate athletic endeavor.

This absorbing interest prevailed despite reports of lengthening casualty lists accompanying the gridiron sport on the nation's campuses. When eighty-two players died from football injuries during the three-year period 1903-1905, a protest arose against the brutality of the game.<sup>45</sup> While the record discloses no football fatalities at Gettysburg in those years, serious injuries could hardly be avoided.

The Gettysburg program did manage to escape the extremes of semiprofessionalism which infected intercollegiate football at larger and more prestigious institutions. No doubt the thin financial resources available at Gettysburg forestalled such abuses, although every effort was made to attract schoolboys with athletic ability. On September 12, 1900, the *Gettysburgian* reported that the student manager had, during the summer, "been corresponding with a number of promising foot-ball players, endeavoring to get them to come to Gettysburg." The journal did not reveal what inducements were offered, but they may well have been athletic scholarships of one kind or the other. An entry in the trustees minutes for June 13, 1905 discloses that that body limited the number of such grants to twelve each year for all sports and vested the selection of recipients in the hands of the Athletic Council. It is a fair guess that most of these grants went to football players.<sup>46</sup> Nonetheless,

<sup>45</sup>The *Harvard Bulletin* of 1905 thought something seriously wrong with a sport "which requires the constant attendance of skilled surgeons, who conduct on the field what one of the most eminent has called 'a hospital clinic.'" Cited in *The Outlook*, November 18, 1905. In October 1905 President Theodore Roosevelt called a meeting at the White House to consider the matter. The following year saw the formation of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) which attempted to reduce injuries through rule changes. See Frederick Rudolph, p. 376 and Harold U. Faulkner, *The Quest for Social Justice* (New York, 1931), p. 294.

<sup>46</sup>In 1913, *The Nation* observed that spring practice, the enlistment of expert coaches, the scouting of rival teams, and the elaborate system of recruiting athletes from secondary schools "have gone far toward removing the silly notion that intercollegiate games are played just for the fun of the thing." Cited in Faulkner, p. 294.

<sup>42</sup>*Rules Governing Athletic Sports*, Gettysburg College, 1899. A copy of this rules booklet is deposited in the Gettysburgiana Room of the Gettysburg College Library.

<sup>43</sup>Apparently, the faculty suspected that its leniency occasionally was abused. On November 15, 1906, it instructed the chairman of the Athletic Council "to inquire of Manager Smith who were the subs and additional players in both the Swarthmore and Ursinus games."

<sup>44</sup>In 1908 the "Pittsburg-Gettysburg Club" requested the privilege of entertaining the football team at dinner in Pittsburgh on the evening of November 20, the day before Gettysburg would meet Pitt in football. The faculty permitted the squad to leave campus a day early, but it did so with the proviso that "the manager of the football team will not arrange for any additional games away from home than the ones now on the schedule."



student publications of the time at Gettysburg strengthen the impression that football on the campus yet was played as a strictly amateur endeavor.

"By" Dickson may not have been aware of the situation at Gettysburg when he arrived, but he soon discovered that football in the hinterlands differed from that performed on Penn's Franklin Field. After an opening game 13-0 win over Western Maryland his team ran into disaster. It not only failed to emerge victorious in the next seven games (one of which was tied), but it managed to score but five points total while yielding 185 points. The 46-0 loss to the Carlisle Indians, explained the *Gettysburgian*, was partly because the varsity "was composed largely of new men and they, to a great extent, 'subs' from the previous year." Dickinson recorded an unexpected 49-0 win over what the journal described as a frightened, nervous, and psychologically unprepared Gettysburg squad.<sup>47</sup> But the otherwise dismal season ended on a brighter note when before an unprecedentedly large crowd of 2,000 at Lancaster Coach Dickson's charges humbled F. & M. by a 6-0 score. So overjoyed were members of the team that at game's end they bore Coach Dickson from the field on their shoulders.

During the disheartening string of losses in 1900 the *Gettysburgian*, analyzing the state of affairs, refused to saddle Coach Dickson with blame for the team's sorry performance. Rather, the journal attributed it to inexperience of the players and the lack of a permanent coach. In its opinion, so long as Gettysburg depended on temporary athletic instructors, no matter how able they might be, "will athletics here be an uncertain factor." This constituted a handicap which required ingenuity to overcome. On December 12, 1900, the *Gettysburgian* advised Gettysburg's gridders to emulate those of the University of Michigan and take up wrestling during the winter months.

Then came word that the popular Dickson would not be returning for the 1901 football season.<sup>48</sup> History appeared to be repeating itself. But in May the campus community learned that Livingston Smith, who had coached at Penn for four years, would direct Gettysburg's football athletes during their 1901 season. Once again students awaited the arrival of a new coach with sanguine expectations.

In September Smith appeared and, according to

the *Gettysburgian*, put the players through a series of drills "for the development of the mind, such as running the ball back on punts, gathering quarterback kicks, and other preliminary exercises." Whether this training was more mental than physical, it produced sufficient skills to enable the team to open the season with an 18-5 victory over Western Maryland. Encouraged by this promising start, the *Gettysburgian* lauded the new coach: "Rarely does a foot-ball coach so quickly win the respect of the entire student body as Coach Smith has done this year." Developing a winning team at Gettysburg was a "rather stiff proposition," the writer recognized, "yet we believe he is doing it."

Any doubts on this matter seemed resolved when in their second game the team startled the football world with a 6-5 conquest of the powerful Carlisle Indians on a muddy Harrisburg Island Park field. "Truly it was a beautiful game," reported the *Gettysburgian*, adding that "the six hundred spectators that braved the weather were well repaid for their drenching." Delighted students gathered *en masse* at the Reading Railroad depot that evening to welcome their heroes back to the campus. The crowd sang college songs, gave college yells, blew horns, staged a parade headed by a drum corps, stopped at the homes of Professors Bikle, Himes, and Breidenbaugh for short speeches by each of them, and closed out the celebration with a large bonfire which lit up the campus.

As the team readied itself for the Penn game at Philadelphia two weeks later this enthusiasm yet prevailed. Students arranged for a play-by-play account of the game to be relayed by telegraph and announced by megaphone from the balcony of the Hotel Gettysburg on the Square. The *Gettysburgian* of October 23 reported that with the exception of Captain Speer, who was ill and could not make the trip, "all are in good condition and should make a good showing."<sup>49</sup> The fourteen men who went to Philadelphia did just that before bowing 22-0 to the formidable Penn eleven.

The Penn game took too much out of the team, described by the 1903 *Spectrum* as "one of the lightest that has ever represented the institution." A few days later it collapsed before Bucknell's eleven by a 51-0 score. Rebounding with a 72-0 "laugher" over Lebanon Valley, the team brought the 1901 season to a close losing 24-5 to F. & M. at

Lancaster. Nevertheless, six wins were recorded against three losses, and so pleased was the college community that after the final game students staged a "reception." Professors Klinger and Breidenbaugh praised the team, and Coach Smith in turn praised the College. Each team member made a few remarks; and after a number of renditions by the Glee Club and the "Mandola Club," the celebration ended with the entire gathering joining in singing "The Orange and the Blue."

Some measure of the interest created in football at Gettysburg is illustrated by the reply of the student editor of the *Gettysburgian* to critics protesting his practice of devoting the entire first page of that student weekly to football stories. "We claim," he wrote, "along with the editors of every other weekly that comes to our desk, that as football is the most absorbing interest at colleges at this season of the year, it deserves the prominence that the first page gives it." The 1901 season also saw the first awarding of a "G" to a Gettysburg football player, with Harvey Bickel '05 the initial recipient.

The fears expressed by the *Gettysburgian* in 1900 that without a permanent coach athletics at Gettysburg would be "an uncertain factor" were justified early in 1902 season when Coach Smith, after the first month, took his departure. Under Smith's direction the team turned back Susquehanna 27-11, but was able to win only three more games while losing seven. Yet, the following 1903 season proved that a regular coach was not the complete answer to the problem of winning football. Upon Coach Smith's recommendation, Dr. Samuel Oglesby was engaged to coach the team. The season began with three straight losses to the Carlisle Indians, Lafayette, and Princeton successively. In the three contests Gettysburg failed to score, while yielding a total of 125 points to the opposition. A year which began with this embarrassment ended in complete frustration as the team compiled a record since unmatched by any other Gettysburg football aggregation—a winless season. Lebanon Valley and Susquehanna were tied, but eight games found the Orange and Blue gridders vanquished. They managed to score but eleven points and gave up 265 points to the opposition. Oglesby left midway in the disastrous season, and the 1905 *Spectrum*, noting that the students already knew the reasons for this melancholy record, supplied some details:

In the first place, a harder schedule was urged upon the manager in order to meet the expenses of the team. The very discouraging attendance of students and town people . . . is the direct cause of this fact. . . .

The real fault was in the selection of the coach, Dr. Oglesby. . . .

Immediately after Dr. Oglesby's withdrawal, the squad was placed under graduate coaches—Nicely, Rinard, Henry and White. These gentlemen with the assistance of Captain James stemmed

<sup>47</sup>Dickinson's 1900 eleven was a scoring machine. Among its wins was a 227-0 romp over a hapless Haverford Grammar School team that year. See Frank G. Menke, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Sports* (New York, 1953), p. 400.

<sup>48</sup>Dickson did not give up coaching in Central Pennsylvania. He coached both football and baseball at Bucknell from 1910 through 1913. See Theiss, pp. 390, 405. By 1919, Dickson was coaching at F. & M.

<sup>49</sup>In another column of the same issue, the *Gettysburgian* carried the shocking announcement that "Charles D. Speer, captain of our football team, died this morning (Thursday) at 5:15 o'clock of an abscess in the small intestine." The Penn game was played as scheduled, but the following week football practice was suspended, and the game with the University of Maryland was cancelled. Howard B. Young '03 was chosen to succeed Speer as the team captain.



the tide until the close of the season. It was too late to reorganize the team. . . . To finish the schedule was the great object.<sup>50</sup>

The 1904 season brought Fred C. Vail as football coach, a post he filled for six subsequent seasons. Vail, who had been quarterback on the Penn eleven which in 1893 had trampled Gettysburg's team 74-0, proved to be one of the College's most capable coaches. Under his tutelage 33 games were won, 20 lost, and three tied. Before coming to Gettysburg he had coached at Germantown Academy and Richmond College. With this experience he brought a sense of organization, discipline, and cohesion formerly lacking at Gettysburg. He introduced to the eighteen-man squad the tackling dummy and the "chalk talk," and he paid particular attention to the physical conditioning of the players from whom he demanded immediate obedience.

Vail's first team at Gettysburg won five of its ten games and recorded two ties, losing only to such powerhouses as the Carlisle Indians, Penn, and Lafayette. A cherished victory over F. & M. by a 10-6 score at Lancaster closed out the season.<sup>51</sup> Some kind of postseason celebration seemed in order, so the faculty sanctioned a banquet "to be held under the usual conditions that no intoxicating liquors shall be used."

Indicative of the enthusiastic interest inspired by the 1904 season was the outpouring of candidates for the 1905 squad—including varsity and scrubs, some fifty men reported for practice in September. This amounted to almost one quarter of the men enrolled in the College. Their optimism was not misplaced since the team rolled to seven victories in ten games, holding both Penn and Penn State to low scores (16-6 and 18-0, respectively) before admitting defeat. Especially gratifying was the 72-0 slaughter of F. & M. at Lancaster.

The 1907 *Spectrum* was not slow in crediting Coach Vail for the team's success which, according to the writer, he shared with Captain Paul R. "Polly" Sieber '07. Sieber had already earned the admiration of Gettysburg opponents and the affectionate regard of Gettysburg students by his play during the previous two seasons. Not only had he been honored with the team captaincy in his junior year, but he was also unanimously chosen for this responsible post during the 1906 season.

By any standard the 1906 football season was the most glorious in the history of Gettysburg



*Scoring against Susquehanna—the 1902 season's first touchdown.*

College football, not only in games won and lost, but in the caliber of the opposition and the team's showing against it. The sole defeat came at the hands of a Swarthmore eleven (then a recognized power in intercollegiate football circles) which, according to the 1908 *Spectrum*, was made up of "young mountains" who outweighed Gettysburg's gridders at least twenty pounds to the man.<sup>52</sup>

Long remembered were the games against Penn and Penn State. At Philadelphia on October 3, Gettysburg led Penn 2-0 at half-time by virtue of a safety scored when Rolland Brumbaugh '07 broke through to pin down the Penn quarterback behind the goal line. Shortly after the second half began, Penn used the newly legalized forward pass to score a touchdown and with the point-after-touchdown led 6-2 (touchdowns counted five points each in those days). After an exchange of punts, Gettysburg drove to Penn's 15-yard line from which Sieber tied the game with a field goal (then counting four points). Late in the game, Leslie Lammert '07 caught a pass and ran to Penn's 25-yard line. With a chance to go ahead, Sieber's field goal try was blocked, and the final whistle found the two teams deadlocked in a 6-6 tie score. Overjoyed students on campus responded to the news with a telegram addressed to the team in Philadelphia:

Congratulations to the team. Students wild. Consider tie as good as victory. Athletic fence goes up in flames tonight. Doctor Johnnie Himes threw his hat four feet in the air. Firemen will also turn out. Hurrah for the whole dam [sic] team.<sup>53</sup>

Hardly had the excitement generated by the Penn game subsided when students were celebrating their

heroes' feat in holding Penn State to a 0-0 tie at State College. "Never before," trumpeted the 1908 *Spectrum*, "had a State team been tied or beaten on her home grounds." The showing registered against these two teams justified student enthusiasm.<sup>54</sup> Against both "Polly" Sieber's kicking was featured. Sieber always remembered the Penn game as the highlight of his truly illustrious career. Well might he have judged it so, for if the *Philadelphia Inquirer* of October 30, 1946 is to be believed, he averaged in that one game 64 yards a kicks in twenty-one tries!<sup>55</sup> This feat no doubt earned him mention for All-American honors that year.<sup>56</sup> Until his death in February 1975, Sieber remained loyal to his alma mater. Near the end of his life he told Henry T. Bream that he devoutly wished that at least one grandson would attend and be graduated from Gettysburg College.<sup>57</sup>

It would appear that anything on the gridiron that came after the highly successful 1906 season would



*Fred C. Vail, head football coach 1904-1906, 1909-1911.*

<sup>54</sup>In 1906 Penn won seven of twelve games with victories over North Carolina, Brown, and Michigan and outscored the combined opposition 186 to 58. Penn State lost but one game that year, a 10-0 defeat at the hands of Yale, and tallied 98 points while yielding but ten.

<sup>55</sup>"Big Bill" Hollenback, a Penn football immortal who played in that 1906 game, recalled twenty years later that "that boy [Sieber] could do everything, run the ends, buck the center and kick. How he could kick." Hollenback, who later coached at Penn State, Syracuse, Missouri, and elsewhere, said of Sieber, "I can truthfully say he was one of the very best I ever looked at and I've seen almost all of them." Cited in the *Gettysburgian*, November 30, 1927. See also Robert Peeling, *Football at Gettysburg College (1890-1953)*.

<sup>56</sup>The tradition that Sieber was named an All-American, Gettysburg's only football player to be so distinguished, needs re-examination. His name does not appear on the official Walter Camp All-American team for 1906 or for any other year. Nevertheless, if he was not on that honorary team, perhaps he should have been. Ordinarily, then as now, only players at prestigious universities made that team. Sieber certainly deserves title to being the College's top all around football player. During his four years of varsity play he scored 249 points, including 14 field goals.

<sup>57</sup>From Gettysburg Sieber attended the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and carved for himself a notable career as a skilled surgeon. His alma mater recognized his distinction in 1938 by awarding him an honorary degree and in 1960 named the newly erected college infirmary in his honor. His obituary may be found in the *Gettysburg Times* of February 26, 1975.

<sup>50</sup>Illustrative of the "harder schedule" was the faculty's permitting the team to play Lafayette in Easton and then without returning to Gettysburg travel over to Princeton to face that powerful eleven. See the faculty minutes for October 1, 1903. Perhaps this explains why Gettysburg held Lafayette to an 11-0 score but crumbled before Princeton's team 68-0.

<sup>51</sup>The Gettysburg - F. & M. games continually drew large crowds, and thus was established for a number of years the tradition that this meeting between the close rivals should be played in Lancaster on each Thanksgiving Day.

<sup>52</sup>Gettysburg's 20-man football squad in 1906 averaged 163.4 pounds, 165 pounds on the line and 160 pounds in the backfield. This may be contrasted with the College's 56-man squad in 1974 which had an 188 pounds average overall, 206 pounds on the line and 170 pounds in the backfield.

<sup>53</sup>A facsimile of this telegram is reproduced in the 1908 *Spectrum*, p. 156.



be anticlimatic. Coach Vail was with the football squad only through the first game and then took his departure after being given "a rousing send-off by a large crowd of students." His replacement was George Johnson who remains an almost unknown figure in the College's football annals. Student publications at the time are generally silent as to his background, and it is evident that he made little impression on the college community. Nevertheless, his team split even in its eight game schedule. According to William B. McClure, student manager, three games were cancelled in 1907, but each of them "doubtless would have been victories for the Orange and Blue."<sup>58</sup> F. & M. again tasted defeat at the hands of the Battlefield eleven when James H. McClure '08 scooted 70 yards for a touchdown in the second half, the only score of the game.

Rolland E. Brumbaugh '07 has the honor of being the first of eight Gettysburg alumni who served as football coaches at their alma mater. He brought with him for the 1908 season a lack of coaching experience, but he had the assistance of a number of Gettysburg's ex-football players, including Frank C. "Doc" Rugh '01, Harry A. Lantz '01, Raymond F. Topper '08, and his teammate, "Polly" Sieber. He also had the help of one of the college's preeminent linemen of those days, the redoubtable Edgar E. "Heine" Snyder, generally accounted as one of Gettysburg's more impressive tackles of all time. A member of the Class of 1909, Snyder captained the team.

With but four veterans returning, Brumbaugh turned enthusiastically to work, and his team won its first three games, including a hard-earned 6-5 win ground out against Bucknell. The team came out of this battle in crippled condition, and only four days later it faced Penn at Philadelphia. Although Norman Phillip's dropkick field goal marked the first score that year against the Quaker eleven, Gettysburg's lads ran out of gas in the second half and lost the game 23-4. The 1910 *Spectrum* later explained the loss as due to "faculty restrictions which limited the number of substitutes available."

The 1908 season saw the old rivalry with Dickinson on the gridiron renewed, the first meeting between the two rivals since 1899. As reported by the 1910 *Spectrum*, four hundred fans from Carlisle came across the mountains to swell the crowd, "the largest that ever witnessed an athletic contest at this school." It filled eight sections of the newly constructed bleachers. A rumor that the Dickinson lineup included an All-American proved groundless; after a hard game the Gettysburgians came off with

23-5 win. As the *Spectrum* writer put it, "It was a disconsolate four hundred that steamed [back] to Carlisle with the triumphal Gettysburg song ringing in their ears."<sup>59</sup> A 10-6 triumph over F. & M. in the season's finale crowned the successful 1908 season with its six wins and only two losses.

Students expected much in 1909, particularly after it was learned that Coach Vail was returning after a two-year absence. But anticipation exceeded realization; the squad dropped five of the nine games on the schedule. One of the wins recorded was a 10-0 victory over Susquehanna in a game which lasted but eighteen minutes. The Susquehanna team left the field after a dispute with the officials; and despite Coach Vail's threat that such action would sever athletic relations between the two schools, the disaffected players refused to return to the field even for a "practice game." Football relations were broken, not to be resumed until 1922 when Gettysburg romped to a 47-0 triumph in the last football encounter ever played between the two Lutheran colleges. Although Bucknell won by a 9-3 score in what the 1911 *Spectrum* labelled "probably the greatest game ever played on Nixon Field," the 1909 season could only be described as lackluster. Coach Vail's explanation in the *Spectrum's* columns pointed to two factors—the absence of a competent reserve or "scrub" eleven and a schedule too demanding for the material available to the Gettysburg team.

In the College's second decade of intercollegiate football the teams recorded forty-six victories, bowed to the opposition forty-two times, and tied seven games. The 1900-1909 elevens scored a total of 1,327 points and yielded 1,223 points. These cold statistics, however, do not point up the highlights of that ten-year football decade. They fail to give due weight to "Polly" Sieber's sterling play, particularly his kicking which in the 1906 season brought him eight field goals, three of them in one game against Ursinus.<sup>60</sup> No doubt, those Gettysburgians who saw Jim McClure outrace F. & M. players for 70 yards in the waning moments to tally the winning touchdown in 1907 will long remember it. They also may have sensed that Norman Phillip, the captain of the 1907 eleven, had "football brains,"

<sup>59</sup>While of questionable poetic excellence, the words of this triumphal ditty may be worth remembering:

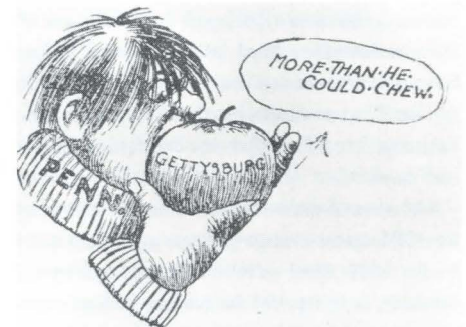
To Carlisle they'll wander,  
Sad as they can be.  
Dickinson, we're sorry,  
But we won, you see.

<sup>60</sup>Sieber's eight field goals in a season still stands as a record for a Gettysburg player. In 1922, Henry T. "Hen" Bream booted three field goals against Ursinus, and in 1969 Craig Schneider matched this feat against Hofstra. It should be remembered that while both Sieber and Bream dropkicked their goals, Schneider kicked his from placement.

for he was later to serve as head coach for Gettysburg's 1912 team. There also were a number of outstanding linemen. John F. Jenkins '10 must have seemed enormous with his 6 feet, 2 inches and 227 pounds. There also was "Heine" Snyder who, after being graduated valedictorian of his class, entered the Lutheran Theological Seminary and later the Lutheran ministry. The saga of "Heine" has been told by Cy Peterman, a Philadelphia sports writer:

Looking back over five decades of football, Gettysburg alumni agree their outstanding lineman was Heine Snyder, a giant at tackle who played four college seasons and one at the Seminary. . . . Heroic feats have been numerous at Gettysburg, as in any school where football has flourished, but the tale of Heine Snyder's rescue of a hard put squad in that pre-War era stands high in the hall of fame. Western Maryland, or some equally rugged foe, had been underrated [and] were pushing the boys around a lot.

Suddenly Snyder . . . then a student in the



A newspaper cartoonist's impression of the Penn-Gettysburg tie of 1906.

Seminary, was paged in the stands. He hustled down, rushed off to the gym, climbed into fighting togs, and thereupon without any previous practice, signal drill, or training the doughty young man led Gettysburg to a second half triumph.<sup>61</sup>

By 1910 a new era was dawning for Gettysburg College football. Direct control of the program by the board of trustees had been relinquished, the faculty was keeping a looser rein over athletic affairs, and responsibility for conducting football and other sports at Gettysburg was assumed by the Athletic Council. The trials of early childhood had been largely overcome; and in the remaining years prior to the First World War, the athletic program progressed much on the momentum provided during the previous decade.

<sup>61</sup>*Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 9, 1940. Whatever school had to contend with Snyder on that memorable afternoon it was not Western Maryland which did not appear on the football schedule during the years 1908 through 1915.

<sup>58</sup>1909 *Spectrum*, p. 151. The games cancelled had been scheduled with Baltimore University, Lebanon Valley, and Mount St. Mary's.



## On the Diamond, Court, and Track, 1900-1910

**S**TUDENT ATHLETES at Gettysburg who found football not to their taste had other opportunities to gain intercollegiate athletic honors during the first decade of the twentieth century. While football appeared to have captured perhaps disproportionate attention, baseball still dominated the spring sports scene as the second "major sport." Basketball, born as an intercollegiate enterprise in 1901, waged a successful struggle to gain major status by 1910. But it required some time and effort to develop a track program. Following the 1899 dual meet with Dickinson, attempts made to maintain interest in the sport faltered. Not until well within the decade did the student runners, jumpers, and throwers establish themselves as worthy of

faculty on October 25, 1901 to permit the baseball manager to accept an invitation extended by the Harrisburg Athletic Club for a game to be played the following spring. "Such an engagement," reasoned the faculty, "would help defray the expenses of the club on their Bucknell trip." Yet, this concession included a characteristic proviso: "The request is granted, provided it is ascertained that the Hbg. A. C. is a strictly amateur club in good standing." A month later the faculty agreed to a game with Penn at Philadelphia as late as June 17 "in view of the great financial advantage the game offers." One surmises that only the prospect of pecuniary return induced the faculty to acquiesce in an extended schedule.

On one matter the faculty yielded with reluctance—the number of players permitted on the baseball team's traveling squad. It limited the June 17 trip to Penn to "the team with the absolutely necessary substitutions and officials." As the

of May, and the day previous being a 2/3d holiday, an extra period is hereby allowed in order to play a game at Middletown on the 30th, provided the train schedule remains as it now is.

A standing rule permitted baseball and football players fifteen extra periods of absence from classes. On December 11, 1902, the faculty granted permission for a southern trip by the baseball team in April "with the understanding that the matter of having the usual 15 periods besides these shall be considered later." The results of that consideration are unknown; but on February 18, 1904, the faculty refused to allow baseball players a total of twenty-three absences as requested by the student manager. Instead, the faculty adhered to its fifteen absences regulation but made an important exception. If the Dickinson baseball game at Carlisle was to be "played on a mid-week work day," seventeen absences would be granted to the players. In an at-



*Penn versus Gettysburg on Franklin Field, October 1908.*

consideration. Neither tennis nor soccer, both of which emerged tentatively as intercollegiate sports in those years, managed to rise much above the category of athletic sideshows.

One important reason why baseball continued to hold student interest was the overall winning record of the various teams during this ten year period. Beginning in 1900, the several nines engaged in 157 games, winning eighty-four and losing sixty-nine, with four games ending in tie scores. Five of the ten seasons were winning ones, two campaigns found more games lost than won, and in the remaining two the teams broke even. The batters scored 987 runs while the pitchers and fielders yielded but 763 runs to the enemy. Altogether, these statistics provided reason for modest pride.

The baseball teams, like those of football, continued to be subject to faculty supervision. Students often contended that their teams would have had greater success had the faculty interfered less. That body did at times yield to overriding practical considerations and adopt more liberal policies. For example, there remained always the pressing problem of finances. That persuaded the

professors saw it, ten men plus the manager were sufficient to represent the College at away games. As late as 1907, when the team won thirteen of its sixteen games in spite of such restrictions, the student manager (Fred W. Wittich '08) registered a complaint through the columns of the 1909 *Spectrum*:

The handicap of only being allowed to carry one extra man besides the manager on an extended trip nearly proved disastrous. It is almost impossible for two pitchers to support a team and unfair to expect it of them, yet this has been Gettysburg's condition for many years. It is earnestly hoped that some provision will be made in the future for another extra man at least.

Already, however, the faculty was bending a bit. On March 25, 1908 it granted a request that the squad be expanded to eleven men on baseball trips.

Concern over class absences on the part of the diamond athletes likely determined faculty restrictions on the size of the traveling squads. Yet even here allowances sometimes were made. An entry in the faculty minutes for April 10, 1902 demonstrates the faculty's occasional leniency on the matter:

In view of the game with Ursinus on the 31st



*Gettysburg followers getting the play-by-play report from Franklin Field by telegraph, October 1908.*

tempt to regularize the rules, the faculty on March 25, 1908 consented to allow baseball players "a maximum increase of 50% cuts over the general allowance to any one during all the trips and proportionately to any one absent a portion of the trips." Then on the following December 18 this rule was made applicable to all athletic teams.

Gettysburg's diamond heroes got off to a good start in the 1900-1909 years largely because they had the services of "Eddie" Plank on the mound. What "Polly" Sieber was to the football team in those days, Plank was to the baseball nine. For two seasons, 1900 and 1901, this Adams County product baffled collegiate batters while he was enrolled in Gettysburg's "Preparatory Department." Born on August 31, 1875, he was in 1900 and 1901 a schoolboy wonder at the age of twenty-five.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>62</sup>Contrary to a later impression, Plank was never a Gettysburg College undergraduate. His name does not appear on the matriculation records nor in the 1932 edition of the *Alumni Record*. Someone did insert it in the 1956 edition of that publication, but it seems to have been done so arbitrarily.



The 1901 baseball team compiled an admirable record of twelve wins in sixteen games. At the close of the season the *Gettysburgian* explained its success as due to the experience gained on a spring vacation Southern trip, the enthusiastic support of the student body, and the team's "sparkling play" behind its "three excellent pitchers." In addition to Plank, the other two hurlers were George L. Winter and Paul H. Ketterman '01. Ketterman was graduated and later entered the Lutheran ministry, but both Plank and Winter at the end of the 1901 season went directly from the campus to the major leagues. Without an apprenticeship in the minors, Plank signed with the Philadelphia Athletics and Winter with the Boston Red Sox, both teams of the American League.

Like Plank, Winter was a "Prep" at an advanced age (he was born on April 27, 1878). Also like Plank he never enrolled as an undergraduate at the College. Both men enjoyed unusual success in their first year of major league pitching. Plank won 16 games and lost 14 in 1901, and his erstwhile teammate, Winter, recorded 17 wins against 10 losses. In three of the Athletics-Red Sox meetings that year they faced each other as the opposing pitchers. Winter triumphed in two of the games. The lead paragraph of a *Philadelphia Record* sports story on August 14, 1901 began: "It was Winters [sic] vs. Plank; Gettysburg vs. Gettysburg, today."<sup>63</sup>

Although Winter remained a major league pitcher until 1908,<sup>64</sup> it was Plank who gained baseball immortality. During his seventeen seasons with the Athletics and the St. Louis Browns, he pitched in 622 games, winning 326 against 194 losses. He appeared in four World Series and his overall 2.34 earned run average justified his being elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame.<sup>65</sup> Following his retirement in 1917, Plank returned to Gettysburg and in June 1925, at the age of forty-eight, took the mound for an Alumni nine against the college varsity. The alumni triumphed 8-1 and, reported the *Gettysburgian* of March 3, 1926, Plank allowed the college team but one hit.

Although it had no full-time coach, the 1901 Gettysburg nine sailed through its sixteen game

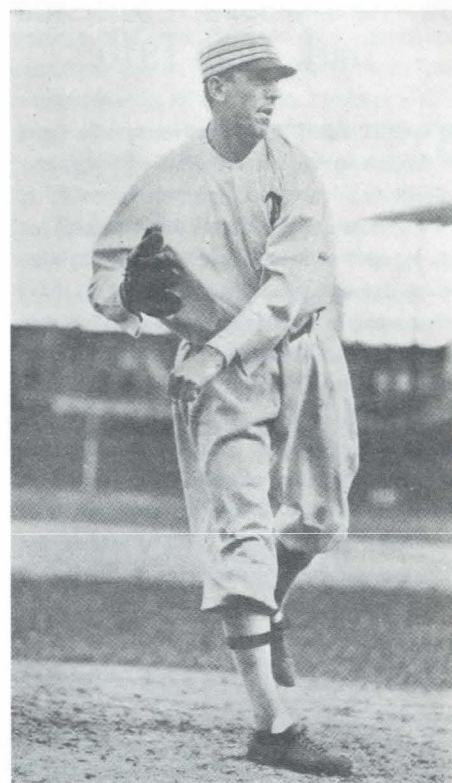
schedule with few hitches. It was a long season, with the first game played on Nixon Field as early as March 16 and the closing game on May 15 against Dickinson at Carlisle. In this season finale Plank pitched his last game for Gettysburg College, yielding the Dickinsonians but three hits and striking out ten batters.

The departure of Plank, Winter, and Ketterman seriously weakened the mound corps for the 1902 season, so the team did no better than split even in sixteen games. In 1903, however, the team rebounded with thirteen wins as against seven setbacks, three of the losses incurred at the hands of Trinity (Duke), North Carolina, and Virginia during a seven-game Southern tour.

For the next two seasons victories were hard to come by. In the thirty-five games played, Gettysburg won but eleven and recorded an 8-8 tie with Dickinson in 1904 under what must have been regrettable circumstances. The 1906 *Spectrum* offered no details, but reported that "in their first meeting in several years on the baseball field, an unfortunate incident occurred to mar the friendly relations which should exist between Dickinson and Gettysburg in athletics." More to be deplored was the sorry performance of the team. "We can truly say that our team played good ball," observed the 1906 *Spectrum*, "and the defeats were often due to an unfortunate tendency to go up in the air at critical moments." A writer in the 1907 *Spectrum* was more critical. The six wins and eleven losses record of 1905 was caused, he wrote, "by internal trouble in the team rather than by any great dearth of material." Little or no team work characterized the team's play, "and a disastrous spirit of indifference threw a chill over the best efforts."

Whatever the difficulty, efforts to overcome it apparently were successful, for during the years 1906, 1907, and 1908 Gettysburg's baseball teams won thirty-three games as against seventeen losses and a 6-6 tie with F. & M. The 1908 *Spectrum* reviewed the 1906 season as "in many respects the most successful in recent years, both financially and otherwise." It commended the managers for "increasing baseball interest instead of baseball profits," a policy it was sure "will bear fruit another year." Evidently it was sound policy, for in the next two years the team continued to play winning baseball, including important victories over Virginia, a touring Louisiana State nine, West Virginia, and Pitt, not to speak of triumphs over such old rivals as Dickinson and F. & M.

In 1909 came the almost inevitable slump, producing a losing season for the first time in four years. The schedule opened with a 22-1 romp over a team from the U.S. Revenue School, and a later 4-1 conquest of Dickinson helped offset the 4-2 setback at the hands of F. & M. Despite the fact that this



*The Philadelphia Athletics' Eddie Plank—Gettysburg's contribution to the Baseball Hall of Fame.*

decade of intercollegiate baseball ended with the team proceeding in a downward direction in wins and losses, overall Gettysburg's baseball athletes had made a respectable showing against many larger schools and more than held their own with those considered as equals.

In the winter of 1900-1901 intercollegiate basketball arrived on the Gettysburg campus. Invented in 1891 by Dr. James Naismith for the Y.M.C.A. training college at Springfield, Massachusetts, this game filled the long winter gap between football and baseball. "Just at this time of the year athletics are at a standstill," declared the January 1896 issue of the *College Monthly*. "Foot-ball is over, and all outdoor sports are prevented on account of the weather." Basketball therefore met a real need, and in January 1897 the *College Mercury* reported rising student interest in it. Although the writer displayed imperfect knowledge of the game, he endeavored to persuade his readers as to its advantages:

This game, as it requires considerable skill and activity, is fast winning its way, and deservedly so, into popularity amongst college men. It is played somewhat on the order of foot-ball with perhaps the danger element eliminated.

Basketball would be a new departure in the athletics of our college and there seems no reason why we should not put a strong team in the field as we have abundant material from which to select. Our gymnasium affords excellent ad-

<sup>63</sup>This account noted that in this "rubber game" between them Winter had in the sixth inning his Plank with a "fast in-shoot," forcing Plank from the game. This was a most unfriendly way to treat an ex-teammate from Gettysburg, but the Red Sox won the game.

<sup>64</sup>Winter won 81 and lost 100 games during his nine seasons in the American League, eight with the Red Sox and his last with the Detroit Tigers. Somehow he acquired the nickname "Sassafras," but it is not clear whether he brought this name from his Gettysburg days or not. See David S. Neft, ed., *The Sports Encyclopedia: Baseball* (New York, 1974), p. 129.

<sup>65</sup>Plank's record may be found in two sources: Neft, p. 126 and in the Hy Turkin and S. G. Thompson, eds., *The Official Encyclopedia of Baseball* (New York, 1956), p. 280.



vantages for the game and it is just the thing for livening up the winter term. Let us, by all means, "get into the game."<sup>66</sup>

As early as December 1897, the *Gettysburgian* added its voice to the campaign to bring basketball to Gettysburg College. "No one doubts that it is fine exercise . . . and one of the best exercises for developing foot-ball." It recalled the Gettysburg-Carlisle Indians football game of the previous month on Nixon Field, a game which had ended with the visiting Indians galloping to an 84-0 win. The lesson to be learned, the *Gettysburgian* writer noted, was "the number of beautiful double-passes they made, which accounted for many of their long runs!":

This skillful way of passing the ball the Indians learned from playing basket-ball. . . . A college team could be chosen from class teams and games could be arranged and played with a number of universities and colleges. Gettysburg is one of the few colleges that does not have a basket-ball team.

Continuing its plea for basketball, the *Gettysburgian* in February 1899 printed a summary of the rules for the game and reported it becoming a favorite with students, particularly among the football and baseball players. "It is a game both highly interesting and scientific," the journal explained, adding that it "helps to develop the quickness of judgment and motion which is one of the first benefits of the outdoor sports." Moreover, "athletic training is now incomplete at any college unless it embraces basket-ball." Three weeks later the *Gettysburgian*, declaring that the game should have been adopted as an intercollegiate sport at Gettysburg long since, observed that the necessary materials and equipment were on hand "and everything prepared for establishing the game permanently" on the campus.

The materials and equipment available included a gymnasium, which had been created by the renovation of Linnaean Hall ten years earlier. As early as 1868, Gettysburg students had agitated for a gymnasium, but not until 1871 did the trustees respond. In that year they formed a committee to look into the matter, and this committee concluded that the students had made their point. Furthermore, there existed a growing need for a facility adequate for the annual Commencement exercises. Consequently, during Commencement Week of 1872 the committee met with interested students and faculty and signalled a go-ahead on the project.

Turning with a will to collecting funds, students soon raised \$700 toward a gymnasium. A contribution of \$1,500 from J. B. McCreary of

Philadelphia permitted construction to get underway and justified naming the new facility, when completed, the "John B. McCreary Gymnasium." Located just northeast of Pennsylvania Hall, the wooden structure was constructed for \$2,300 and was ready for use by the fall of 1872.<sup>67</sup>

From 1872 to 1890, McCreary Gymnasium served the needs of the College. However, as enrollment grew and student interest in indoor athletics increased, it proved wholly inadequate. At the same time, the demands made by the burgeoning "Chemical Department" led Dr. Edward S. Breidenbaugh to inform the trustees that Linnaean Hall, long devoted to instruction in science, was no longer adequate for that purpose. In January 1889, therefore, the trustees sought to solve a double problem by authorizing a study of the feasibility of swapping the functions of McCreary Gymnasium and Linnaean Hall. The following November they let a contract for converting both buildings to their new uses. By the spring of 1890 the work had been completed.

To transform Linnaean Hall, originally built in 1847, required considerable renovation. The work included extending the north side 24 feet, replacing the old roof, and making a number of "other structural changes." When completed, the remodeled structure measured 72 by 44 feet and had two stories. On the first or ground floor was a dressing room which measured thirty by thirty-six feet and had an eleven-foot ceiling. In the dressing room the plans called for placing 270 heated and ventilated lockers. This floor also held a washroom measuring sixteen by twenty-six feet, and it contained two small ring showers with shampoo attachments. Room yet remained on the floor for a two-lane bowling alley and a water closet constructed according to the "Smead dry closet system."

The second story, on which was located the playing floor, measured sixty by forty feet, not including a small professorial office. Two large skylights and a series of windows provided daytime illumination. Seven feet above the main floor and surrounding it next to the walls ran the gallery with its indoor running track. With justifiable pride the *College Monthly* of February 1891 asserted that "the alumni and friends of the college can rest assured that this is strictly a first class gymnasium in all its appointments and appliances."<sup>68</sup>

Some additional renovation was required ere intercollegiate basketball made its appearance on

campus in the winter of 1900-1901, but at the same time the facility compared favorably with those of sister colleges. The gymnasium served more or less well until 1926 when the Eddie Plank Memorial Gymnasium was constructed.

Dr. George D. Stahley, accounted the campus oracle of the science of physical conditioning, wrote in the November 30, 1898 issue of the *Gettysburgian* that basketball and gymnasium work would strengthen all athletes, "and the occasion for explaining defeats will be less numerous." Thus persuaded by Dr. Stahley, aware of the progress of the game elsewhere, and seduced by basketball's natural appeal, Gettysburg students enthusiastically took up the sport. In February 1899, in what was possibly the first organized basketball game ever played on the campus, a sophomore and a freshman quintet played to an 8-8 tie.

Intercollegiate basketball, however, had to wait until February 1901 before it became a part of the Gettysburg athletic scene. By January 1900, stated the *Gettysburgian*, letters were being received from other campuses asking for games but "our managers . . . have been compelled to answer that there was no organized team." Captain Frank C. Rugh of the football team attempted to organize a team and issued a call for candidates. Although the *Gettysburgian* reported that the call had met with "a good response and a lively interest is being shown," it was too late in the season to form a team and arrange a schedule.

By January 1901 Gettysburg was ready for basketball. An eight-man squad was created with Rugh, G. F. Leffler, H. C. Hoffman, and J. M. Bordy, all of the class of 1901, as members. Others included A. B. Richard and W. C. Ney of the class of 1902 and U. F. White of the class of 1903. Later D. B. Kase, a Bucknell graduate who was "pursuing a special course" at the College, appeared. Since he had played the game before, he was at first chosen captain; but his uncertain status raised some questions, and the captaincy was given to Leffler. It did not prevent Kase from coaching and even playing as a member of the team.

On January 17, the faculty signified its cooperation by authorizing the team manager to schedule games with Dickinson, Bucknell, and Penn State. Later it permitted the addition of the Williamsport Y.M.C.A. five to the schedule because, as the faculty minutes stated, "it seems necessary to add this engagement in order to make a paying trip." Already having anticipated this welcome development, the *Gettysburgian* on the previous day announced the schedule which had been arranged and then added:

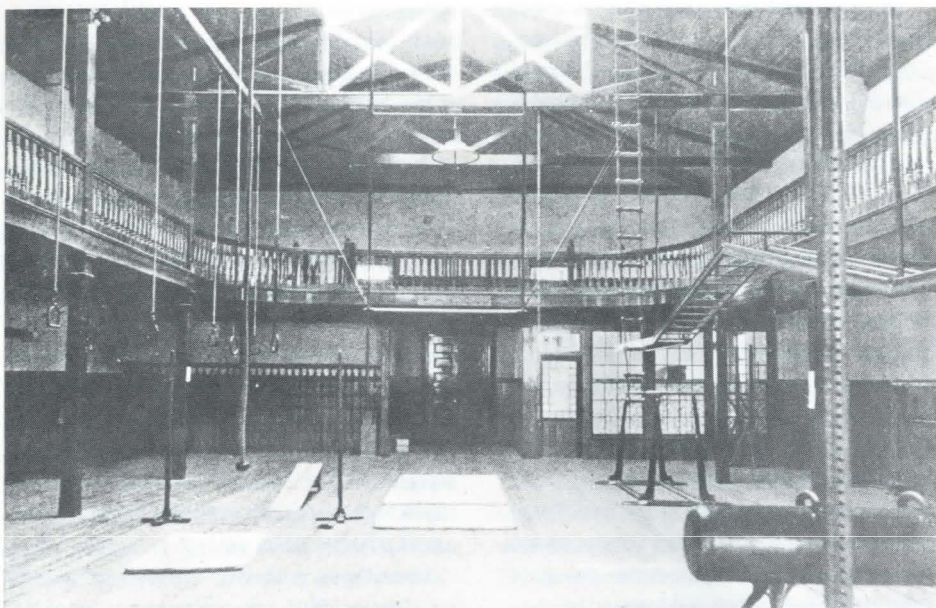
While some of our sister institutions have pursued the game for several years, yet we fall right into line by being prepared to meet all

<sup>67</sup>Hefelbower, pp. 245-246.

<sup>66</sup>Some colleges were already getting into the game. "On March 20, 1897," reports the *New York Times* of August 7, 1975, "Penn visited Yale to play the first intercollegiate game between five-man basketball teams."

<sup>68</sup>This description of the new gymnasium may be found in the February 1891 issue of the *College Monthly*. The edifice is no longer standing. It was located on a plot between Pennsylvania and Glatfelter Halls and in 1942, much to the regret of many old time Gettysburgians, was razed lest it collapse.





*The interior of Linnean Hall gymnasium before renovation for basketball.*



*Gettysburg's first varsity basketball team. First row, from left, A. B. Richard '02 and W. C. Ney '02. Second row, from left, D. B. Kase, Frank Rugh '01, G. F. Leffler '01 and J. M. Bordy '01.*

challengers just at the time when the game is being played so universally in the college world.

Despite optimistic expectations, Gettysburg fared poorly in terms of wins and losses in this initial season of competition. On February 6, 1901 the team traveled to Carlisle to participate in the first intercollegiate basketball game in the College's history. Dickinson's more experienced quintet trounced the visiting Gettysburgians by a 42-14 score. Two nights later, Gettysburg students paid an admission fee of 25 cents each for the privilege of watching their basketball representatives absorb a 30-11 defeat on the home floor by the Bucknell team. February 16 saw the Orange and Blue's first intercollegiate basketball triumph when Gettysburg turned back the visiting Dickinsonians 22-16 in a return game. The Dickinson lads, explained the *Get-*

*tysburgian*, were handicapped in trying to adjust to the floor and rules at Gettysburg, the same problem, it noted, which had confronted Gettysburg's five in the first game played at Carlisle. Following this came a three-day trip which found Gettysburg's cagers losing 54-11 at Bucknell, 26-8 to the Williamsport Y.M.C.A. outfit, and 51-4 to Penn State at State College. The overwhelming defeat at Penn State, declared the *Gettysburgian*, was due in large part to the very "large floor" on which the game was played.

No one could deny that this first start in basketball was a limping one, yet few saw in the lone victory in six games reason for discouragement. In reviewing the season, the 1902 *Spectrum* saw hope for future success:

This year has seen the addition of one new branch of sport to those already in our midst—that of Basketball. Following the moves of many of the universities and athletic associations of the country, and taking the advance in respect to many of our rivals, the game has been instituted and has met with promising success in its infancy. The gymnasium affords sufficient room for all the necessary equipments for playing the game and its future is looked forward to with much interest.

Two formidable problems confronted the team during the 1901-1902 season—finding collegiate opponents and winning games. Gettysburg faced only Bucknell as a college foe and lost both games. The team met a town team from York and the Y.M.C.A. teams from Williamsport and Steelton, and its 50-24 win over the Steelton cagers marked its sole triumph. The following year, however, not only were eight games arranged with collegiate opponents, but Gettysburg managed to win five of them. All in all, the team won six of its eleven

scheduled games, a level of success which elicited enthusiastic comment in the columns of the 1904 *Spectrum*:

Each year the game is growing in favor and each year we are having a more efficient team. Throughout the fall term the members of the present team practiced most faithfully and the result of this work is now apparent . . . These games in the gymnasium are coming to be ranked among the most interesting events of the winter season.

Reviewing the 1903-1904 season in which Gettysburg won half of its eight games, Clarence M. Schaeffer '04, the team manager, wrote with confidence in the 1905 *Spectrum* "that if Gettysburg had a large floor on which to practice, she could develop from the good material around the College one of the best teams in the State." Scores of these early games clearly reveal the home-court advantage which often determined both the outcome of the game and the margin of victory. To illustrate, in 1902-1903, F. & M. embarrassed Gettysburg with a 47-9 win at Lancaster, but in the return game at Gettysburg the home team overwhelmed the visiting Lancastrians by a 65-18 score. A year later Gettysburg won 42-7 on its court and fell 69-37 to F. & M. at Lancaster. In 1905-1906 the teams split their two games with Gettysburg, conquering F. & M. 23-17 at home and then surrendering 72-20 on the F. & M. floor.

No doubt these lop-sided scores resulted from the lack of standard floor sizes which prevailed. The home team always was more familiar with the idiosyncrasies of the home gymnasium. Inexperienced and untried officials, with their varying interpretations of the rules, created problems. In January 1903, Gettysburg managed to eke out a 19-18 victory over Susquehanna at Selinsgrove despite the confusion which beset the referee. A contemporary account of this game asserts that "he was also afraid to call fouls on his own club and consequently they carried the ball over the floor in much the same manner as foot-ball."<sup>69</sup> Gettysburg won the return game at home 60-20, but it is a safe bet that this score did not measure the respective abilities of the two teams.

By the time of the 1904-1905 season, basketball had become sufficiently established at Gettysburg to permit the formation of an alumni team which bowed to the varsity 38-18. This was one of only three victories recorded against six defeats. Apparently the big winner that year was the smallpox scare. On February 7, 1905, local health authorities, after examining a student who bore pink spots on

<sup>69</sup>Alfred A. Morse, *History of Intercollegiate Basketball and Track* [at Gettysburg College] an unpublished senior history thesis, Gettysburg College, 1931.



his body, quarantined the entire campus, posting yellow placards which read: "Any Person Entering These Premises Will Be Confined Therein Until the Disease Has Terminated." As a result, something of a general exodus of students occurred. Two days later a State Health officer arrived and diagnosed the malady as chicken pox,<sup>70</sup> but not before the basketball schedule became a casualty. A similar scare on the Bucknell campus brought cancellation of a projected trip north by the Gettysburg team. Despite such vicissitudes, the home games drew larger and more enthusiastic crowds than ever, and the 1906 *Spectrum* congratulated all concerned for the financial success realized from the basketball program.<sup>71</sup>

The 1905-1906 team encountered no smallpox scare and managed to win seven of its eleven games, but it did not escape trouble. In mid-season three sophomores on the squad were suspended for a student prank. Yet, interest was maintained because, as the 1907 *Spectrum* explained, "the intervals between the games were, as a rule, short and this served to keep up the interest of both players and spectators." The highlight of the season was the 23-17 win over Bucknell, the first time a Gettysburg basketball team had ever triumphed over this bitter rival.

The following season was disappointing because the faculty reduced the nineteen-game schedule, set up by the manager, to ten games. Student annoyance at the faculty veto was expressed by the manager, Clifford C. Hartman '07 in the columns of the 1907 *Spectrum*. In his opinion the faculty action "practically ruined" the season, and he added that "we realize that too much time can be given to athletics, but feel that all should be dealt with fairly, and one [season] not limited to less cuts than are absolutely necessary and another more."<sup>72</sup>

A difficulty which had been intensifying for some time reached something of a climax during the 1907-1908 season. The growing interest in basketball and the inherent attractions of the sport, along with the modest success of Gettysburg's teams, brought increasing numbers of spectators to the games. As a result, it became more difficult to accommodate those who sought admission into the small gymnasium. One solution attempted was to

cease advertising the games abroad. As the 1909 *Spectrum* put it, the idea was "to recommend that they be made a more private affair, instead as before, open to the general public." As a consequence, the management lost money, a development which could hardly be accepted. Such difficulties, however, did not prevent the team from winning five of its seven scheduled games that year.

This problem of limited gymnasium space for spectators was to plague the Gettysburg basketball program well into the mid-1920s. "It is very evident," explained Manager Oliver D. Mosser '09, in reviewing the 1908-1909 season, "that with a gymnasium of larger seating capacity greater crowds would attend the games." Despite this, however, Mosser reported the season a financial success. The basketball team itself was less successful, winning four games and ending on the short end of the score five times. The manager explained that this record would have been better if some colleges normally fielding teams had done so, and he assured readers of the 1910 *Spectrum* that "it was the aim of the management to offer a schedule which would elevate the position of Gettysburg in the basketball world." To this end he arranged a game with Penn at Philadelphia, but the 52-19 trouncing administered to Gettysburg in that game probably did little to advance the management's purpose.

The 1908-1909 team had one advantage denied those earlier at Gettysburg—the instruction of a regular coach. Fred C. Vail had come to the campus in 1904 to coach the football team and had enjoyed considerable success at it. Assuming that his innate athletic ability and gifts of leadership could be adapted to basketball, the Athletic Council persuaded him to assume responsibility for that sport. Vail thus became the College's first official basketball coach, a post he filled for six subsequent seasons.

Vail's tutoring did not solve immediately the problem of promoting winning basketball at the College. His team's record of four wins and five losses in his first season was followed by five victories against six defeats in his second.<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless, there existed little apparent reason for undue pessimism. The 1909-1910 season started with three straight setbacks, and Coach Vail later explained that this poor beginning came from the team members' unfamiliarity with each other's style of play. As the season advanced, however, they overcame this disadvantage, and the team won five

the remaining eight games. The 1911 *Spectrum* detected another reason for the relatively poor record. The manager, Ernest H. Yohn '10, "was terribly handicapped by his late election, which necessitated scheduling some games as he could, not as he would."

In its first ten years of intercollegiate basketball competition the teams which represented Gettysburg College won thirty-nine games while losing forty-five. It was not a bad record in view of the fact that for the first eight seasons the teams were coached by player-captains. No doubt many of Gettysburg's opponents had a similar arrangement in effect.

Game scores reveal that the team averaged slightly more than twenty-five points a game during this initial decade, a figure matched by the opposing quintets. Defense was the name of the game. More than that, compared to today's race-horse basketball, the play was slow-moving. "Polly" Sieber transferred his athletic talents from the football gridiron to the basketball court, and during three seasons he led his teammates in scoring with a 9.4 average per game. In the 1905-1906 season, B. A. Strohmaier '06 scored 132 points in eleven games. However, fifty-two of his points came on foul shots. In those days, all freethrows might be tried by a selected sharp-shooting member of the team.

Although track and field sports made a feeble and halting start at Gettysburg in the latter 1890s, they soon fell prey to student apathy and disinterest. Nevertheless, track met a real need and proved a boon to those students too light for football, too unskilled for baseball, and too short for basketball. Those with athletic aspirations could compete, and, as Dr. John B. Zinn '09 later recalled, "If you did not do well, it was no one's fault but your own." One advantage possessed by the struggling track teams of the early 1900s—their low profile—enabled them to escape much of the faculty interference that beset the more prominent sports programs. Rarely if ever did problems arise from extended road trips, undue absences from classes, and the need to schedule contests solely with an eye to financial returns.

This is not to say that track athletes did not face problems. In the first place, they knew little of training rules. A proper diet hardly concerned them. They simply reported after classes each afternoon and ran and ran. Zinn, who ran the 100-yard dash in 10 seconds in dual meets in 1908, had never had formal instruction in running before he reported for the team. His lone previous experience, he later remembered, "was in running from my enemies." Like the others, he furnished his own equipment and received instruction from a fellow student and fraternity member, Clarence L. S. Raby '08. Raby, as a student at Perkiomen Academy, had participated in track and upon entering Gettysburg as a student, he

<sup>70</sup>Hefelbower, pp. 441-442.

<sup>71</sup>It may be that the larger crowds gathered because basketball, as then played, filled a need normally provided by football for those eager to see vigorous action. The 1906 *Spectrum* reported that in the Bucknell game "several men were laid out but were again able to resume playing."

<sup>72</sup>Hartman evidently felt that the basketball team was the victim of discrimination in favor of football and baseball. For some reason there is no mention of this faculty veto in the faculty minutes.

<sup>73</sup>In his six years at the helm of the basketball teams (1909 through 1914) Vail's teams won but forty of their eighty-two games, a record which may have indicated that regular coaches did not necessarily insure success for a basketball team in those days.

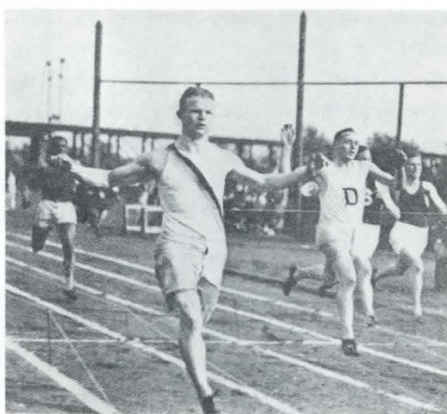


brought with him experience and enthusiasm. He became the spark-plug of new interest in the sport. Dr. Zinn remembered him as a hard taskmaster, a trait which enabled him to turn out a respectable and competitive team from a group of inexperienced students.

Not the least of the handicaps faced by trackmen in the early 1900s was the lack of a decent running track. Dr. Zinn recalls that for practice he dashed along the tan bark sidewalk which ran the length of West Lincoln Avenue. In 1908, however, this deficiency was overcome when Burton F. Blough, described by the 1910 *Spectrum* as "Gettysburg's Patron of Athletics," contributed funds for the construction of an oval cinder track within the precincts of Nixon Field. Raby persuaded his Alpha Tau Omega fraternity brothers to begin the work of construction, and eventually other students joined in. As he had done in the creation of Nixon Field, Dr. Henry B. Nixon did the required surveying. Members of the track squad and others removed the sod and excavated the track area a few inches; and after wagon loads of crushed stone topped by cinders were put down, Gettysburg College had a useful running track.<sup>74</sup>

This new track and the formation of a track team in 1908 represented a triumph which had been sought for some years. Following the ill-fated dual meet with Dickinson in 1899, student interest had faded. In the spring of 1900 a feeble effort was made to revive the sport. On April 26, 1900, the faculty granted permission for "C. S. Carmony, Henry J. S. Collier, and G. C. Smith" to participate in the Penn Relays at Philadelphia that year.<sup>75</sup> The faculty, at its May 17 meeting, permitted the "track team" to travel to Carlisle for a meet with Dickinson. Apparently, neither venture was successful enough to earn mention in any of the student publications of the time.

Following this 1900 effort, track at Gettysburg became the victim of student disinterest. In November 1900, the *Gettysburgian* did report track candidates already running cross-country and working with machines in the gymnasium; and in January 1901, it announced hopefully that an encouraging number of students had responded to a call for practice. This activity, however, represented



**Doly Leathers '13 winning the 220-yard dash at the Harrisburg Intercollegiate Meet May 18, 1912.**

little more than a feeble effort to remain alive. On May 15, the *Gettysburgian* regretfully reported the cancellation of the scheduled meet with Dickinson because "a number of men have been incapacitated by illness and other unforeseen causes."

In the spring of 1902 track activity was conspicuous by its absence, and the 1904 *Spectrum* published an obituary:

Track athletics, once an interesting feature of our college sports, has declined. Two years ago a meet was held on Nixon Field, but interest seemed at a low ebb. Last year no track work of any kind was done, and there is no promise of any for this year. Just why this sport has died out it is hard to say. Material is not lacking, for there are men in college who have ability in this line but the proper stimulus for its exercise seems to be wanting.

There existed no discernible improvement in the situation the following year, and the 1905 *Spectrum* made an effort to revive student concern.

For some years track athletics has been at a low ebb. Gettysburg has turned out victorious football, baseball, and basketball teams which have been an honor to the College . . . A good track team is an honor to a college. It is one of the cleanest sports of the Colleges. It is an attractive sport and one of the most healthful.<sup>76</sup>

Not until the spring of 1906 did interest in track revive from the four-year coma into which it had lapsed. Even so, its future on the campus was yet uncertain, despite an interclass meet which the 1908 *Spectrum* thought "shows clearly that track athletics have come to Gettysburg to stay." The following spring saw the formation of a mile relay team which was entered in the Penn Relays at

Philadelphia. The quartet included Clarence Raby '09 and H. Stanley Pownall, Zenas O. Fiscus, and Edmund L. Manges, all members of the class of 1908. They welcomed the services of Roy Dunkelberger, a seminarian, who had captained and coached the strong Dickinson track team the previous year.<sup>77</sup> Together with Raby, Dunkelberger prepared the relay team which finished fourth at Philadelphia against teams from Pratt Institute, St. Johns of Annapolis, Delaware, West Chester, Gallaudet, F. & M., and the Maryland Agricultural College. A writer in the 1910 *Spectrum* believed they would have won this race but for two unfortunate slips in passing the baton.

In addition to another try at the Penn Relays in 1909, two dual meets were special features that season. Although Gettysburg ended up on the short end of the score in both, their scheduling represented further progress. An invading Bucknell team returned home as victors 71-33, but a week later at Huntingdon the Orange and Blue trackmen battled Juniata down to the final event before bowing by a close 55 1/2 to 52 1/2 score. Despite these two losses, a failure to gain better than fourth place at Philadelphia, and placing but one man (Edgar A. Miller '09) in the hammer throw in the Pennsylvania Intercollegiate Meet at Harrisburg, track was taking hold. The 1911 *Spectrum* viewed "Gettysburg's third year in track [yielding] very satisfactory results." Among them was John B. Zinn's victory in the 100-yard dash at Juanita. He covered the distance in 10 seconds flat, a mark which stood for many years at Gettysburg.<sup>78</sup>

"Every year track is becoming more popular," the 1911 *Spectrum* had concluded in reviewing the 1909 season, and it added that "the spirit manifested shows that track work has come to stay." A terse entry in the faculty minutes for April 29, 1910 reads "Application from Captain Sachs asking for more meets is referred to Ath. Com." The action on this request is not known, but the 1910 track team again met Juniata and Bucknell in dual meets that spring. The 1912 *Spectrum* reported that the Juniata meet, held on Nixon Field, was in doubt until the final event when two Juniata men placed first and second in the high jump enabling the visitors to gain a 57-52 triumph. At Lewisburg Bucknell's runners conquered 76-32, a margin of victory, according to the *Spectrum*, due to "the con-

<sup>74</sup>Yet, Raby, writing in the 1910 *Spectrum*, noted that because Nixon Field was not large enough for the standard quarter-mile oval the track when completed was but one-fifth of a mile in length. He added that "this caused not only the trials to be slow but also unsatisfactory."

<sup>75</sup>Dr. Stahley, as recording secretary for the faculty, still was having difficulty with proper names. The students in question were Carl S. Karmany '02, Jesse S. Koller '00, and George C. Smith '02. Apparently, the spelling of "Smith" posed no problem for Dr. Stahley.

<sup>76</sup>Although the 1905 *Spectrum* carried a photograph of sixteen students dressed in track uniforms and labeled the picture "Track Team," it reported no results of any competition in which the squad members might have participated.

<sup>77</sup>The late Rev. Dunkelberger was the father of Dr. Harold A. Dunkelberger '36, currently Professor and Chairman of the Department of Religion at Gettysburg College.

<sup>78</sup>The 1911 *Spectrum* credits Zinn with a victory in the 220-yard dash against Bucknell with a winning time of 23 1/5 seconds. In an interview on October 8, 1975, Dr. Zinn expressed doubts as to the accuracy of this report, since, he declared, "I could never have lasted that distance." Nevertheless, this feat has remained on the official record.

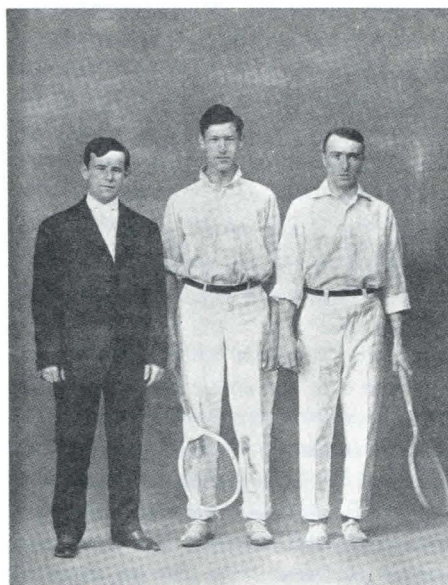


dition of the track [which] gave Bucknell the advantage and enabled them to run up a large score."

Intercollegiate track at Gettysburg in the years 1900-1910 never succeeded in engendering the enthusiastic interest accorded to football, baseball, or basketball. Nevertheless, a number of factors favored the sport. In the first place, the College felt no obligation to provide funds for its operation. Expenses were met by money collected from an unofficial group of alumni and well-wishers who got financial contributions from various sources for all athletic teams. Track's major accomplishment was to get itself established on a permanent basis. It succeeded in avoiding the kind of hiatus which had characterized the 1901-1905 years. "Although the older position of track athletics was challenged by football and basketball," a social historian of the early 1900s has written, "it continued to attract a large following."<sup>79</sup> This was less true on the Gettysburg campus than elsewhere. Nevertheless, the few hardy undergraduate participants on the campus who found pursuit of track so satisfactory laid the groundwork for the sport's modest prosperity in the decade following.

As an intercollegiate sport, tennis first saw the light of day on the Gettysburg campus in the spring of 1906. The game was not unknown at the College. As early as 1889 students took part in "tennis tournaments" which were strictly intramural affairs. The *College Monthly* of May 1890 reported that "twenty names have been entered for the tournament" which was to take place on Commencement Day that year.<sup>80</sup> By 1898 some students looked to the possibility of broadening tennis operations to include meetings with outside foes. "We believe," the *Gettysburgian* of May 11, 1898 declared, "that Gettysburg would make a good showing in an inter-collegiate tournament."

Not for seven years was the *Gettysburgian* belief put to a test. In the spring of 1906 a team, made up of Donald W. Huber '08, Keller E. Rockey '09, and Herbert S. Dornberger '06, met a Dickinson team in two matches and engaged in single matches with Bucknell and Swarthmore. The Gettysburgians made a promising start with victories in all four matches. The following spring the team defeated Swarthmore again, but dropped home-and-home matches to Dickinson and Bucknell. In 1908 F. & M. was added to the schedule. The 1909 team failed to win in five matches. Nevertheless, the 1911 *Spectrum* writer carried on the honorable tradition at Gettysburg of viewing athletic prospects through rose-colored spectacles, observing that



*Varsity tennis made its intercollegiate debut in 1906. In this picture that appeared in the 1909 Spectrum, H. W. Davison '08, left, is listed as the manager while Keller Rockey '09, center, and Bennett '11 (first name not known) were chosen to represent the college in intercollegiate meets.*

Viewed in terms of victories won the season was not a success, because Gettysburg did not win any of the inter-collegiate tournaments. But in view of the amount of interest taken and the earnest efforts on the part of the players to make the season successful the result was all that could be desired.

Tennis had established itself permanently as an intercollegiate sport at Gettysburg, a fact which the faculty came to accept with as much grace as possible. In 1906 the faculty had responded to the student manager's request "that he be allowed to arrange a tourney with Dickinson and perhaps also with Bucknell" with a qualified veto. On April 12, it ruled that "no further leave of absence can be granted for athletics unless a reduction be made from time now allowed to our teams for trips to other institutions." Four years later, however, on March 17, 1910, the faculty voted to permit five additional "cuts" for members of the tennis team. To student minds, no doubt, this represented real progress.

The first decade of the century closed with the initial manifestations of interest in soccer as an intercollegiate activity. Faculty minutes for February 3, 1910 reveal that "Coach Vail requests that he be allowed to take 12 men to Reading on March 12th to play soccer with High School team." Although these minutes include the statement, "no action taken," an idea had been born. The 1912 *Spectrum* carried a photograph of the "Soccer Team," although it published no account of games played or results attained.

## The Adolescent Years, 1910-1918

ACCORDING to the dictionary, "adolescence" is that transitional time "between puberty and adult stages of development." It refers to that period when physical growth outpaces psychological growth, when naïveté and sophistication struggle for supremacy, when a yearning for freedom and independence encounters the need for some authoritative supervision, when the inexperienced must accept, even if reluctantly, the guidance of the more experienced.

From 1910 through the years of the First World War, Gettysburg College's intercollegiate athletic program reflected all these traits. Thus, in any review of that program's progress to maturity—to adulthood, as it were—one is justified in using the adjective, "adolescent," in describing it.

During the period in question a number of basic changes occurred at Gettysburg, whether for good or ill might have been a debatable matter. In the first place, more students arrived on campus. The undergraduate enrollment from 1910 to 1918 increased more than a third. Perhaps this meant only that the small college at Gettysburg was not so small as formerly. No doubt this growth probably had something to do with the expansion of the intercollegiate sports program.

Of greater importance were the structural changes effected in the governance of athletics at the College. While there occurred no sudden nor complete break with the past, the prime responsibility for overseeing the athletic program shifted from the faculty to the Athletic Council. True, the faculty still exercised authority, at least at the start, over such matters as athletic eligibility, class absences on the part of athletes, and the selection of suitable opponents. It continued to fulfill its chief function, protection of the academic program against undue encroachment on the part of athletics.

The trustees had by now charged the Athletic Council with overall direction of the athletic program. Yet, the faculty could and did make recommendations either to the trustees or the Council. For example, on November 23, 1911, Professor Abdel R. Wentz '04, the faculty's representative on the Council, reported to the faculty regarding the history and purposes of the National Collegiate Athletic Association which had been organized a few years before. The faculty promptly recommended "that Penna. College unite with the association providing the Athletic Council pay the entrance fee of \$25." When in May 1912 the operation of the athletic training table showed a deficit, the faculty resolved

<sup>79</sup>Faulkner, p. 292.

<sup>80</sup>The journal also reported that over thirty students had signed up to participate in the "Field Day, which will consist of Jumping, Running, Racing, Putting-shot, Throwing Hammer, Throwing Base-ball, and a number of amusing feats."





**Members of the Gettysburg College Athletic Council of 1914 were, first row, from left, John F. Dapp '89, Paul B. S. Rice '11, Professor Albert Billheimer and Donald Ikeler '15. Second row, from left, H. J. "Shorty" O'Brien, Edgar Eyer '15 and Harry L. Stahler '82.**

(May 23) "that the Athletic Council prohibit the running of training tables." Although the Faculty Minute Book does not reveal the Council's response on these matters, Gettysburg became a member of the N.C.A.A. in 1911, and for a number of years training tables were not a part of the athletic program.

Problems which had engaged faculty attention earlier continued to require that body's consideration. Among them was the ever sticky question of athletic eligibility. As early as January 7, 1909, the faculty had voted "that no man shall be allowed to engage in any intercollegiate athletic contest who has not been a student at the institution at least three weeks." Recognizing subsequently that this regulation would work a hardship on freshman football players each fall, the faculty acted on June 9, 1910 to suspend the rule for the first three weeks of each fall term.

Apparently, liberalization of the rule failed to forestall its evasion at times. On November 25, 1914, the *Gettysburgian* published a confession:

Last week a man was brought into our school from another college. He is a good player and would have aided much in strengthening the backfield of our team. He was not registered as a full student, however, but was brought here merely for his football ability. This is contrary to our system of management at Gettysburg, so the faculty at its last meeting decided to expel the man from school.

The man in question, continued the writer, through a misunderstanding had entered the game with Bucknell as a substitute. He then added,

Professionalism in athletics is unknown here at Gettysburg. All our men are taking full courses of study and are not here merely for the "football" courses as are given at some schools. Our authorities will not tolerate any other system and we honor them for it. Such regulations are the only kind which can be used if Gettysburg is to hold her high standing in intercollegiate affairs.

It may be that a controversy arising that fall was back of this disclaimer. Dickinson cancelled its scheduled visit to Nixon Field, charging that Get-

tysburg, in violation of a 1911 agreement between the two colleges, was planning to use two Preparatory Department students in the game. Professor Albert Billheimer, chairman of Gettysburg's Athletic Council, replied by asserting that the contract had long since been violated by both schools. In a countercharge he accused the Dickinson coaches of playing a man named "Wilson" in the 1913 game with Gettysburg just five weeks after the same "Wilson" had appeared in Penn's lineup against Gettysburg.

The Dickinson rejoinder to this is not on record, but a week or so later when a move for reconciliation got underway the *Gettysburgian* advised caution. It recalled the 1911 pact permitting both Law School and Theological Seminary students to play, but added that "we seldom if ever have played Seminararians [while] Dickinson's team is composed largely of Law Students." The safest rule, argued the writer, would be to bar all but duly enrolled undergraduates, an arrangement he understood Dickinson had rejected. It is impossible today to determine the relative merits of the two College's respective cases, but the result was a four-year severance of athletic relations between the two neighboring schools.<sup>81</sup>

Difficulties associated with "tramp athletes" were by no means confined to the Gettysburg campus. On February 3, 1916, President William A. Granville reported to the faculty several recommendations adopted by the Association of College Presidents of Pennsylvania on the problem. The faculty took no action on that date, but one week later it did act, resolving that

A student entering Pennsylvania College from another college or university shall be required to be registered as a student at Pennsylvania College for a period of one calendar year before he is permitted to take part in inter-collegiate athletics.

Inextricably associated with the question of athletic eligibility was that of athletic scholarships. Throughout this period certain students were granted free or reduced tuition and room and board for their contributions to the athletic program. Such grants came from the Athletic Council and were funded through collections from interested alumni and well-wishers. Yet, the faculty had some voice in the matter. On January 21, 1915, the faculty recommended that the scholarships held by P. W. New and Fred Leamy be cancelled "for the whole year if possible" because of their unsatisfactory performance of their duties as athletic trainers. When a

<sup>81</sup>The *Gettysburgian* for January 12, 1916 reported the failure of a try at patching up relations in time for a football game the next fall. It noted, however, that Dickinson had declined on the grounds that "their football prospects . . . were at such a low ebb that they did not feel that Dickinson could make a creditable showing."

week later New asked for a hearing before the faculty, that body referred the whole matter to the Athletic Council where it properly belonged.

A fillip to the program came in the fall of 1915 with the addition of additional rooming facilities for athletes on "free rides." the *Gettysburgian* for September 22 carried the following item:

A fine accession to the athletic department is the house which stands on the corner of Nixon Field. The house was formerly occupied by Dr. Stouffer. The house is large and well appointed. This makes it well adapted by its situation and conveniences, for the housing of athletes. The house will accommodate quite a few of the men and will be known as "The Athletic Field House."<sup>82</sup>

The editorial comment accompanying this announcement stated that this arrangement "voices the progressive spirit of the institution," a spirit which demonstrated the growing stature of athletics on the campus.

Another persistent problem faced by the faculty was that of holding athletes to a respectable academic standing. The *Gettysburgian* tried to help, and in October 1915 it appealed for students who could tutor the football players. "Make their scholastic work easy for the men who are working hard," it urged, "by helping them when football practice and games throw them back in their work." If such assistance ever was tried it did not last long, or at least was not wholly effective in some cases. In April 1917 the faculty denied the privilege of athletic participation to two students who were at the time failing two courses. It also provided for the suspension from participation of any athlete whose grades fell below a "D" in two courses. Approving this policy, the *Gettysburgian* noted that the same rule was followed at other colleges and that the faculty's decree "puts Gettysburg on the same level with all the other schools."

On one other matter the faculty still had the decisive voice—that of class absences. Football games on foreign fields always seemed to interfere with Saturday morning classes. At times the faculty, with the greatest reluctance, had permitted the suspension of these sessions. In 1911 students pled to be allowed additional class absences to attend the Gettysburg-Johns Hopkins game at Baltimore. On this occasion the faculty "passed the buck," as it were, and voted "that the Professors be allowed to make some other arrangements." One can surmise that woe betide the professor who was unfeeling

<sup>82</sup>Some years later this structure, by no means a "field house" in the modern sense of the term, was moved from its location where Breidenbaugh Hall now stands to a new site on West Lincoln Avenue. There it served until 1960 as the college infirmary.



enough not to entertain the idea of "other arrangements." The faculty minutes also contain the following entry, dated September 25, 1913:

In the matter of petition of student body for suspension of classes on Sat. Sept. 27 on account of foot-ball game with U. of Pa. it was decided "that it be left to the individual departments to make, where possible, arrangements for Saturday morning recitations."<sup>83</sup>

The faculty was only one of the three organizations which, during the years 1910-1919, governed one phase or another of athletic affairs. The board of trustees earlier had set up the Athletic Council, a body directly responsible to it as a semiautonomous agency. The Council solicited funds, handled revenue from the games, and authorized whatever expenditures seemed necessary. In short, its chief function was to guard the financial health of the enterprise.<sup>84</sup>

Until December 1913, the Athletic Council was a five-member group, but the trustees, acting at the Council's request, on December 30 of that year increased its membership to eight. Then on June 6, 1916 the trustees accepted President Granville's recommendation for "Revised Rules and Regulations for the Athletic Council." The revision set up a nine-member Council which included as *ex officio* members the President of the Board of Trustees and the College President. It provided that a faculty member would serve as president of the Council with the Athletic Director as vice president. The secretary's post was to be filled by the Graduate Manager of Athletics and one of the two alumni members was to undertake the treasurer's duties. The membership would also include two students, one of whom was to be the President of the Student Athletic Association.

The office of Athletic Director had been created a few weeks earlier. On May 24, President Granville announced the appointment of Doyle R. Leathers '13 to this new position effective the following September. For the *Gettysburgian* Dr. Granville explained that this step meant modification of the College's athletic policy, and he then, added,

Gettysburg has in the past suffered because of the lack of a consistent and comprehensive plan which could be followed from year to year. Because of this the athletic material among the new students entering College and Academy has not

been fully developed . . . To accomplish [a more creditable athletic record] a definite continuous system of physical training must be followed and a man is needed who shall be in intimate touch with all our athletics . . . Too small a proportion of our students take active part in our athletic activities. An Athletic Director of the right sort will surely be able to interest the great majority of our students in some form of regular physical exercise. We want a man who will throughout stand firm for clean athletics and discourage any tendency which demands pay for college loyalty and service in her honor. That Mr. Leathers will "fill the bill" is the opinion of all . . .<sup>85</sup>

The enlarged Council's prerogatives remained about the same as before with an important addition. Henceforth, "with the advice and consent of the President of the College," the Council would appoint the athletic coaches, fix their salaries, and provide for payment of the same. The new arrangement evidently was designed to inject a greater degree of stability into the athletic program.

From the inception of intercollegiate athletics at Gettysburg the Student Athletic Association, subject to a degree of faculty supervision, had undertaken responsibility for administering the intercollegiate sports program. Any satisfaction students may have had at being relieved of these sometimes onerous duties which had been theirs for a quarter of a century was tempered by an awareness that the Student Athletic Association had declined in influence. This did not always sit well with some athletically oriented and articulate undergraduates. Now the Association's function was limited to collecting student athletic fees and contributions, conducting pep-rallies, and making recommendations as to policy.

If the *Gettysburgian* was an accurate indicator of student sentiment,<sup>86</sup> Gettysburg undergraduates often chafed at their reduced influence. For example, student team managers no longer were chosen by the Athletic Association but by the Council. On September 30, 1914, the *Gettysburgian* lamented the lowly estate to which student managers had fallen. These once important functionaries, it reported, had been reduced to erecting goal posts, pumping up basketballs, chasing stray balls at baseball games, and "seeing that the suitcases of the team are carried to the train." Not permitted to accompany the

teams to away games, they "are apparently not trusted or given any important authority." Their only "pleasant task" was that of "distributing advertising posters and having them displayed in the store windows of the town."

As a member of the Athletic Council, Harry L. Stahler felt constrained to reply to the implied criticism of the Council's policy. In a letter which appeared in the *Gettysburgian* of November 11, Stahler stated that "our present system calls for a Graduate Manager, and in Prof. Moser we have one who is filling the position to the entire satisfaction of the present Athletic Council." While he was at it, Stahler had another grievance to air. The *Gettysburgian* on November 4 reported that "On Oct. 30, at an Athletic Association meeting it was almost unanimously decided to instruct the Athletic Council to try to effect a conciliation with Dickinson . . ." Stahler reacted to this with some asperity. "Since when," he asked, "has the Athletic Association the right to 'instruct' the Athletic Council?" Continuing, he offered some advice:

If the Athletic Council had the proper support of the student body as a whole, . . . it would be greatly more encouraging to . . . the Athletic Council than to be constantly criticized, both privately and in the public prints, in the manner which has been in vogue ever since the opening of the college year.

Apparently, in this instance, Stahler believed in government for the people rather than government by the people.

On an additional matter the aggrieved Stahler had his say. In a talk in Chapel to the student body, reported in the October 21 issue of the *Gettysburgian*, "Coach Liebgott of the Scrubs" advised students to demand more voice "in the athletic governing power," rather than acquiescing to one-man control of athletic policy on the campus. The journal added that Liebgott's statement "was greeted with much enthusiasm by all who heard him."

Because of his numerous and generous financial contributions to the athletic program Stahler was likely the one-man power to whom Liebgott referred. At any rate, Stahler read this news item with anything but pleasure. His letter advised students who had complaints to approach the Council in the proper way and expressed the hope that in the future there would exist more cooperation between the various groups to the benefit of the athletic program all around.<sup>87</sup> The June 1916 reorganization, however, had failed to increase student

<sup>83</sup>Less than a year later (March 26, 1914), the faculty ruled that athletes "unable to keep their cuts within the regular 15% allowance, would be required to satisfy individual professors in advance of each trip, as to work missed." This at least was qualified liberality.

<sup>84</sup>In November 1914, for example, council member Harry L. Stahler '82 informed the *Gettysburgian* that on the previous Commencement Day the Council had collected \$2,700 from alumni and friends for the athletic program. He added that one-third of this sum had come from members of the Council.

<sup>85</sup>Leathers was to supervise both intercollegiate and intramural athletic activities. A product of Perkiomen Academy, he had entered Gettysburg in the fall of 1909 and was to "fill the bill" as player, coach, and Athletic Director until his departure in 1927.

<sup>86</sup>The editors and staff of this journal were elected by the student body; but the faculty could, and sometimes did, shorten the tenure of individual "staffers." At some risk one assumes that this student weekly was an accurate reflector of student opinion, but it is a risk which must be taken.

<sup>87</sup>Stahler's angry letter filled three full columns of the November 11 issue of the *Gettysburgian*. In another column, the editor took cognizance of Stahler's interest in the well-being of the College, as evidenced by his past contributions, but refused to apologize for presenting "the facts as they are."



representation on the Council and the *Gettysburgian* of January 24, 1917 complained that "certainly, the students have not been given a 'square deal' representation on the Council."

Among other duties assumed by the Athletic Council was that of fixing the standards for awarding the varsity "G" for athletic accomplishments. In February 1915, the "G" Club appeared on campus, its membership limited to varsity athletes. Its avowed purpose was to promote athletics on the campus by active recruiting of promising material in secondary schools and improving conditions for athletes at the College. At the suggestion of this organization, the Council drafted rules for determining the eligibility of letter-winners. Baseball players must have participated in two-thirds of the games, although pitchers could qualify with appearance in but one-third of the contests. Letters were to be awarded football players who had played in half of the scheduled games, but these should include both the Bucknell and F. & M. games.<sup>88</sup> To win a letter in basketball, athletes had to contend with rules a bit more complicated. In this instance, to earn a letter players must have played one-half of the playing time in one-half of the games. For some reason no provision was made for letters in either track or tennis, although the *Gettysburgian* later reported that the Council had awarded the "Musical 'G'" to members of the glee club, the orchestra, and the mandolin club.

In view of the fact that the College Band had become an integral part of the football scene, it is odd that the Council overlooked that organization in awarding letters. In the fall of 1910, ten students with some musical training formed a College Band which performed at football and basketball games, pep rallies, victory parades, and other similar occasions. A loyal alumnus from York contributed \$50 for the purchase of instruments, and additional funds came from "stag dances and other novel performances in the gymnasium." Within a year this organization had established itself, and the faculty cooperated by permitting band members "the same number of cuts as other student [athletic] associations." By 1913 the band was deemed so much a part of the football program at Gettysburg that it was traveling to Gettysburg football games on other campuses. The *Gettysburgian* of February 9 that year urged student support of a \$200 campaign to purchase band uniforms. "A college without a band," it informed its readers, "is like a home without a piano."

Despite these differences respecting governance

of the intercollegiate program at Gettysburg, they did not weaken student interest in the fortunes of the several teams. Throughout these years the *Gettysburgian* exhibited some ambivalence on the matter, waxing warm or growing cool, a reflection more of the views of individual editors than of the student body as a whole. For example, on December 21, 1910, the journal bemoaned the waning interest in the literary societies. Why, the editor wondered, could not they attract attention equal to that of the athletic teams? "The one is just as necessary as the other," he declared, and in his judgment, "athletics train the body; literary societies the mind."

Yet a year later under a different editor, this student weekly was calling for the creation of a Trophy Room, and in March 1912 it hailed the newly established practice of awarding sweaters to varsity athletes. It approved the action of the Athletic Council which provided \$75 for this purpose. The next week's issue found the paper proclaiming that "the public judge a college by the success or failure of its athletic teams," a basis for judgment which the writer thought sound. Reviewing with satisfaction the bright record of the teams for 1913-1914, the *Gettysburgian* of May 27, 1914 declared that "all this indicates that the present change in policy and the search for athletic students brings to our college a greater reputation which will place us on an equal footing with other institutions." This method of winning name and fame for the College, it should be noted, has been favored by later generations of Gettysburgians.

Football continued to captivate student minds throughout the nation. In 1906 the rule makers introduced the forward pass in an effort to reduce the hazard to life and limb;<sup>89</sup> in 1910 they divided the game into four 15-minute quarters. In 1912 intercollegiate football underwent further significance changes. The number of downs necessary to make ten yards was increased from three to four; the kickoff mark was shifted from midfield to the kicking team's 40-yard line; and the dimensions of the playing field were reduced to the present size, 100 by 50 yards with ten-yard end zones behind each goal line.

As early as 1908, a Washington and Jefferson team had astonished spectators by appearing on the field with numbered jerseys, but not until five years later, when the University of Chicago adopted the practice, did the idea take hold. University of Pittsburgh authorities discovered in 1915 that with their players identified by numbers they could sell more

football programs.<sup>90</sup> Although on October 13, 1915, the *Gettysburgian* reported that the N.C.A.A. Rules Committee had recommended numbered jerseys, the device was not adopted at conservative Gettysburg for some years. However, action photographs of Penn-Gettysburg football games on Franklin Field in those years show the Penn players with numbers pinned to their jerseys.

Intercollegiate basketball also saw standardization of rules. Until 1915 rules set forth by the A.A.U. and the N.C.A.A. were used interchangeably. The *Gettysburgian* reported a Gettysburg-Bucknell game in March 1912 in which the second half found "the rule changed from two-handed dribbling to this year's intercollegiate rules." On January 24, 1915, the same paper reported that both the national sports organizations, along with the Y.M.C.A., had agreed on a common set of rules.

Among the battles not completely won at Gettysburg was that for proper athletic facilities. At larger institutions 50,000 seat stadiums provided a backdrop each Saturday afternoon in the fall for football extravaganzas. The *raison d'être* advanced was that such spectacles produced the revenue needed to finance both the minor and intramural sports programs.<sup>91</sup> Obviously, programs of such magnitude were not possible at Gettysburg, although football served much the same purpose on the campus as elsewhere. Nixon Field seemed adequate for football and baseball, and if track athletes could adapt themselves to the shortened cinder track they could get along.

Despite the fact that basketball was prospering at Gettysburg and was largely self-supporting, the gymnasium posed problems. In the first place, dressing facilities were inadequate.<sup>92</sup> More importantly, the teams were handicapped by the small playing floor at home, so this presented problems in adjusting to the more spacious areas elsewhere. The pride with which students had regarded their gymnasium heretofore was tempered by the realization that, as Coach Fred Vail observed in 1912, the Gettysburg floor "is the smallest in this section." The cramped quarters of the Linnaean Hall gymnasium became a justification for the difficulty Gettysburg cagers had in winning games away. Conversely, as the *Gettysburgian* admitted, visiting teams were equally handicapped at Gettysburg.

Student publications naturally made more of Gettysburg's difficulties on the larger courts elsewhere

<sup>88</sup>Rudolph, p. 386.

<sup>89</sup>Faulkner, p. 292.

<sup>92</sup>Henry T. "Hen" Bream '24 remembers that even as late as the early 1920s, team members usually dressed before and cleaned up after games in their own dormitory rooms. Apparently, the gymnasium locker room was given over to the visiting teams.

<sup>88</sup>The absence of Dickinson from the schedules from 1914 to 1917 meant that the Bucknell and F. & M. games now were deemed the crucial ones.





*The 1910 Marching Band—Gettysburg College's first.*

than they did of any advantage the Orange and Blue might have on the home floor. In February 1913 the team suffered two humiliating defeats on successive nights at Niagara University and the University of Rochester. The *Gettysburgian* attributed Niagara's 55-17 rout of the visiting Gettysburgians to "the immense floor of smooth wood . . . a great deal wider than ours is long" which rendered Gettysburg's players "utterly at sea." At Rochester the following night "the long narrow floor was too much for Gettysburg's weary team and the game [won by Rochester 55-7] became a slaughter."

The story of intercollegiate track and tennis at Gettysburg in the years just before and during the First World War might be described as "the short and simple annals of the poor." In the nation at large track contests, despite the overwhelming popularity of football on campuses, attracted a considerable following. This was not the case at Gettysburg. Both the *Gettysburgian* and the *Spectrum* each year lamented the fact that track and tennis as intercollegiate enterprises were yet in their infancy at the College.

It required a real love of the sport and a high degree of perseverance for students to represent Gettysburg in intercollegiate track meets in those prewar years. In the first place, adequate coaching was lacking. What direction was available fell into the hands of men whose principal athletic talents and interest lay elsewhere, usually with football. Secondly, the College provided little or no equipment for track. Colonel Thomas H. Nixon '15, who competed for four years as a pole vaulter and high jumper, had to do his leaping at first wearing running shoes. Not until he had proven himself able to win points did the Athletic Council furnish him with standard jumping shoes. Colonel Nixon also recalls

the bamboo poles used in pole vaulting, poles which had a habit of splintering as the vaulter soared into the air. On one occasion a sliver of wood from a splintered pole became deeply embedded in a vaulter's leg.<sup>93</sup> Finally, the runners still had to contend with the shortened running track which measured but one-fifth of a mile rather than the standard quarter-mile length.

Tennis had an even yet more difficult struggle to get itself established and recognized as an intercollegiate sport at Gettysburg. On May 19, 1915, the *Gettysburgian* asked, "Why is tennis at Gettysburg given such little support?" It supplied its own answer, "Because it is not a major sport." However, the editorial writer thought that this raised the question of how to define a "major sport." He admitted that tennis did not advertise the College as did other sports programs; but he said that if a sport "is intended to serve 'mens sana in corpore sano,'" it would be instructive to review some statistics. Each fall, he noted, football brought out thirty men as candidates for the team. Basketball lured twenty aspirants, and in the spring baseball and track each had twenty-five. In contrast, the thirteen tennis courts on the campus (which included those belonging to the individual fraternities) provided facilities for "no less than seventy-five men actively interested in tennis." Since each player was a potential member of the varsity tennis team, it seemed to the *Gettysburgian* writer highly inconsistent to class tennis as a minor sport.

Tennis, however, continued to lack the publicity and enthusiastic following that characterized the

other intercollegiate sports. This was the case despite a faculty decree as early as May 4, 1911 that the game be "included among authorized sports of [the] college." Throughout the 1910-1919 period the *Gettysburgian* annually announced an ambitious schedule upcoming, and almost inevitably by the end of the season it was able to report but three or four matches held. The intercollegiate "tournaments" arranged were woefully underfinanced. In March 1913, the *Gettysburgian* deplored the paltry \$25 allotted that year for tennis, and two years later the paper pointed out that the sum granted did not come up to the collective total each member of the team had paid in athletic fees. Team members supplied everything needed from courts to balls and, added the writer, had "a list of grievances longer than those which brought on the American Revolution." He urged students to bring pressure on the Athletic Council for a remedy of this lamentable situation.

In April 1916 the *Gettysburgian* reported some progress realized. "Owing to the increasing interest in tennis, and the large number of players, the Athletic Council is taking direct charge of this sport and from now on tennis is to receive more consideration as a college sport." Among the considerations was the reservation of a court for varsity teams only, said court to be "situated in a position to obtain the best conditions of sunlight."

Tennis thus joined football, baseball, basketball, and track as an established intercollegiate activity at Gettysburg. It survived, as did the others, the prewar and wartime vicissitudes. Gettysburg's sports program had thus become a permanent fixture and prepared a sound basis for that "Golden Age of Sport" which arrived with the nineteen-twenties.



*Track captain George G. Hatter '11 clears the pole vault bar with a bamboo pole.*

<sup>93</sup>Interview with Colonel Thomas H. Nixon, April 4, 1976.



## Honors for the Orange and the Blue, 1910-1919

**D**ESPITE the inadequacy of athletic facilities at Gettysburg, inadequacies which, it must be noted, were hardly more deplorable than those prevailing at the sister colleges, the College's intercollegiate teams played out regular schedules during the 1910-1919 era. The decade began with promise in the fall of 1910 when the football squad won six of its nine games. It succeeded that year in defeating all three of its close rivals, Bucknell, Dickinson, and F. & M., a feat not matched by Gettysburg gridders again until the 1941 season. Reviewing the 1910 season in the December 7 issue of the *Gettysburgian*, Coach Fred Vail explained this success:

Two things that are traditional at Gettysburg, and which help our team in the long run are to have as large a Varsity squad as possible and not to play injured men no matter how good or apparently indispensable they are. As a result our teams are not dependent upon a few men nor are we out of the running when a star gets sick . . .

Another gratifying result of this policy is the excellent condition of our men as compared to our opponents and the fact that in seven years we have not had any serious injuries.

This policy, however, did not prevent a series of losing seasons in football in the five years that followed. The continuing practice of meeting such major opponents as Penn State, Penn, Cornell, and the Carlisle Indians, against which Gettysburg recorded not a single victory, contributed to the disheartening record. On one occasion the *Gettysburgian* took cognizance of this and advised a less arduous schedule. Reviewing on December 1, 1915 the sorry record posted by that year's football eleven, a season in which only three of the nine games were won, the editor offered a recommendation:

Let the teams hereafter meet other teams in its [sic] own class; . . . and discontinue playing teams so far out of our class that we are only practice for them. It is not a disgrace to admit that we are not as good as the best, but when we are good let us be good enough to defeat those in our class and our rivals by ceasing to put on the schedule "out-of-class" teams, at least so many of them.

Such considerations led the *Gettysburgian* to welcome the start of a football rivalry in 1911 with Johns Hopkins. "The teams are about on a par," it explained, "and the geological [geographical?] situation of the two schools should make them natural rivals." Moreover,



*Ready to cross the Muhlenberg goalline in 1911.*

At Hopkins, as at Gettysburg, athletics are of secondary consideration, scholastic standing coming first . . . In this way, neither team is given the advantage of star players who go to college for the purpose of specializing in football or some other athletics.

Nevertheless, in the nine-year span, Gettysburg found victories over those colleges in her "class" hard to come by. In the twenty games played against Bucknell, Dickinson, and F. & M., the Orange and Blue managed but six triumphs and one tie score.

Yet, certain notable football contests were etched in the memories of loyal Gettysburgians. The *Gettysburgian* began its story of the 10-3 win over Dickinson in 1910 with a declaration: "While Penn and Michigan were struggling fiercely on Franklin Field, and Old Eli was downing Princeton on Soldiers' Field, there was a game of far more importance to Gettysburgians, Dickinsonians, and their alumni being played on Nixon Field." And the journal gave way to pardonable exultation at Gettysburg's 1916 triumph over Bucknell on Harrisburg's Island Park gridiron:

No words can describe, no pen can write, no form of communication known in the human world can impart the overflowing joy, the inestimable gladness that swept over the Gettysburg College student body when their team . . . last Saturday and defeated, licked, overwhelmed and annihilated Bucknell . . . Ye Gods, that unspeakable satisfaction that comes from a decisive 17-0 score.

Among the nagging problems which beset Gettysburg's football progress was the frequent turnover in head coaches. The 1916 *Spectrum* pointed to the success of the baseball team coached year in and year out by Ira Plank and asked, "Why is not the football team capable of the same result?" Coach Fred C. Vail brought his successful football coaching career at Gettysburg to an end with the 1911 season, and in the next seven years five coaches tried their luck at Gettysburg. Norman G.

Philippy '09, the first alumnus to serve as head football coach, led the team to but three wins in ten games during the 1912 season. The following year John L. "Pete" Mauthe arrived on the campus from Penn State. Mauthe had quarterbacked the Penn State eleven to an undefeated season the year before,<sup>94</sup> but his talents proved unavailing, and the team did little better, winning three, losing six, and deadlocking one game.

Mauthe's replacement in 1914 was H. J. "Shorty" O'Brien who remained at the helm two years. In his initial season his team defeated only the Middletown Athletic Club, while suffering six losses and achieving two tie scores. Nevertheless, the Athletic Council reappointed O'Brien for the 1915 season, and an ever sanguine "staffer" on the *Gettysburgian* saw a new deal in the offing. Explaining O'Brien's first year difficulties as his attempt to introduce "the methods of the large university" on the Gettysburg campus, the writer declared that the coach now saw "that the small college has some problems which cannot be treated in the way they are met in a larger school." Another reason for optimism was the announcement that for the first time ever the Gettysburg players would have a pre-season football camp.

O'Brien's second season was only a little better than his first with its three wins in nine games, and he departed for other parts to be succeeded in 1916 by Robert N. Berryman, another Penn State football luminary. Berryman enjoyed one distinction heretofore denied any of his predecessors. He became also an instructor in the Civil Engineering Department, Gettysburg's first head football coach to serve as a member of the teaching faculty. Following an opening day loss to Cornell in 1916, Berryman

<sup>94</sup>For a recent account of Mauthe's football capabilities, see Al Clark and John Travers, "Football's 'Battle of the Bloody Angle,'" *Harrisburg Sunday Patriot-News*, September 14, 1975.



led his charges to five victories in the remaining eight games. By the time the next football season had rolled around, Berryman had also taken his departure to become the football and basketball coach at Lafayette.

It fell to Doyle Leathers, the Athletic Director, to guide the College's football team through two war-time seasons. In his initial year, 1917, he may at times have regretted his willingness to assume this responsibility, particularly when his makeshift eleven lost to Lehigh 78-0, to Penn State 80-0, and to West Virginia 60-0. In its nine games his aggregation managed to win but twice while losing five and achieving a tie in two games. The *Gettysburgian* explained the drab season as stemming from attention increasingly diverted to "martial and military matters":

The war has taken away our former admired athletes . . . and the new team is composed of inexperienced men who, though they have played hard, have not put up the game of former years. The result of all this is a poorer class of football and consequent lack of interest.

Throughout the winter of 1917-1918, the immediate future of the College's entire athletic program was in doubt.<sup>95</sup> But Coach Leathers, aided at first by the redoubtable "Heine" Snyder and later by William "Bill" Wood, fielded a team in 1918 which played five games. The lack of available opponents brought a resumption of the traditional Dickinson-Gettysburg football rivalry. This resumption of gridiron relations was the cake, and Gettysburg's 21-0 victory was the icing. It was Gettysburg's only triumph in football that year.

During those adolescent years, Gettysburg's football team survived its formidable schedules, the

hampering rotation of coaches, and the later disruption caused by the war. Nevertheless, victory was hard to come by. Altogether, the teams won but 28 of 79 games with six of them ending in tie scores. Considering the relatively unsuccessful efforts against their natural rivals—Bucknell, Dickinson, and F. & M.—it was evident that considerable improvement was required for Gettysburg football teams again to become truly competitive.

Despite the unimpressive record of the gridders during these years, football remained king on the Gettysburg campus. Yet, those student journalists who took the trouble to study the matter discovered that the less visible teams in terms of publicity had made the greater progress. In the *Gettysburgian* of March 29, 1916, the sports editor undertook to name all-star players in each of the major sports during the 1900-1916 period. Of the eleven men he listed for football honors, only three of them had represented the College after 1909. In contrast, his five-man all-star basketball squad included three players who had performed after that year, and the twelve baseballers he named included seven who had batted, fielded, and pitched for the College after that date.

In terms of overall winning percentage during 1910-1919 the College's most successful teams were the baseball nines. The diamond athletes won 71 of 111 games, three of which ended in stalemates. If it was true, as the *Gettysburgian* proclaimed in the spring of 1911, "that a winning baseball team is beneficial to the college," the 1911 and 1912 seasons saw Gettysburg denied this benefit. Then in 1913 began the Ira Plank era, a span of time which was to cover nearly forty years before it ended. Like his more famous brother Eddie, Ira Plank had played during two years for the College nine while a student in the Preparatory Department. He returned to the campus in 1913 to become the first regular baseball coach; but, unlike his predecessors, he did not have to divide his energies each spring

between baseball and track. In April 1910 the Athletic Council had ruled that the baseball coach could not accompany the team on away games because he was needed on campus to supervise the track team. This regulation, apparently, was discontinued with the arrival of Ira Plank.

In the baseball seasons 1913-1916, Coach Plank's teams won 50 games and were defeated but 19 times. He was helped each year by having the services of his brother, Eddie, who instructed the pitchers during the early part of each season. Especially memorable was a 17-inning deadlock gained with Ursinus in a game at Collegeville in 1914, a struggle which ended in a 1-1 tie. The *Gettysburgian* of May 26 reported an interesting detail to the effect that "Johnson, the Ursinus spitball wonder, and Hoar, the former Atlantic City Tri-State Leaguer, engaged in a pretty pitcher's battle," a contest unmarred by a single fielding error.

Baseball plans for the spring of 1917 were rudely interrupted by the outbreak of war. The departure of so many veteran players and the lack of opponents led the Athletic Council to terminate the original eighteen-game schedule after six games had been played, four of which Gettysburg won and one of which was tied. Midway in the following winter doubt existed whether a spring sports program would take place, but the Athletic Council in February 1918 decreed "a short schedule in each of those branches of sport." Thus encouraged, students organized a baseball team and proceeded to win all four games of their truncated schedule. Apparently they achieved this without the direction of Coach Plank. By the spring of 1919 the war had ended, yet the *Gettysburgian* reported on February 26 no schedule arranged and no baseball coach available. A few weeks later, however, it announced that "after considerable dubious controversy, Coach Plank has finally been secured to coach the baseball team for the coming season." Whatever this "dubious controversy might have been," the Plankmen swept to

<sup>95</sup> Athletics were not the only war casualty on campus. On January 16, 1918, the *Gettysburgian* reported that "the 1919 Spectrum staff at its last meeting definitely decided not to publish a copy of the college year book this year."



At left is baseball coach Ira Plank in 1913. The above "safe at second" action picture was snapped during the 1913 season.



an undefeated season in the nine games played.<sup>96</sup>

Intercollegiate basketball at Gettysburg proved its right to be considered a major sport during the years 1911-1919. In that nine-year span the cagers won 76 games, lost 62, and recorded four winning seasons, splitting even in three, and losing more games than won in but two. If the factor of inconsistent floor sizes contributed to the loss column, another may have been the inconsistent officiating. The *Gettysburgian* often attributed losses away from home to incompetent or partisan officials, and apparently teams visiting Gettysburg occasionally registered the same complaint. Therefore, very early the *Gettysburgian* happily reported the employment of "foreign officials" at home games which, it trusted, "will abolish the argument of opposing teams of having a home official."

Despite such mild vicissitudes, basketball rapidly grew in favor among Gettysburg students. Often they complained that a disproportionate number of the games were played away from home, and the *Gettysburgian* on November 30, 1910 explained the imbalance as due to "the small guarantees which are paid and the poor railroad service." However, on May 4, 1911 the faculty recognized basketball, as well as tennis, as "among authorized sports of the College." It is not clear in what manner this action changed the status of either sport.

Until 1912, basketball had been under the direction of the football coach, and from 1910 through 1912 this had been Fred C. Vail. But Doyle Leathers, who had captained the 1911-1912 quintet, remained on campus to coach the team during the 1912-1913 season. A feature of this season was Gettysburg's membership in the "Central Pennsylvania Intercollegiate Basketball League," which included teams representing Bucknell, Susquehanna, and Albright. The Orange and Blue's three wins and three losses in league play gained it a second place position behind Albright, and it did manage to place two players on the All-Pennsylvania College Five. The two so honored were James Mahaffie '16 and Donald Ikeler '15.

"Shorty" O'Brien took charge of Gettysburg's basketball fortunes the following year which also saw the league expanded to ten teams. The "Central Section" was composed of the original league

members. Lehigh, Lafayette, and Swarthmore comprised the "Eastern Section"; the "Western Section" included Penn State, Pitt, and Washington and Jefferson. Although the return of Mahaffie, the team's leading scorer of the previous year, filled Gettysburg supporters with high hopes for a league title, again the team placed second in its division. At season's end the student body voted the most valuable player award, a sweater, to William "Mose" Campbell '17, the lanky center.

The intercollegiate league did not survive its first year of expanded competition. This was a pity since Gettysburg's 1915-1916 team won eleven of its sixteen games. Nevertheless, as the 1917 *Spectrum* called it, it was "the greatest scoring machine in the history of the institution<sup>97</sup> with Mahaffie, Campbell, and Frank "Benny" Williams '17 as "Gettysburg's Triumphant Trio."

Leathers returned to coach the 1916-1917 squad through its seventeen game schedule to record twelve wins. The two successive winning seasons drew the interest of the metropolitan press. On March 11, 1917 Philadelphia's *North American* published a photograph of the team and accompanied it with a summary of the season's record. As a result, reported the *Gettysburgian*, "the popularity of the 'North American' has increased rapidly among the college men," and it declared that four hundred copies had been sold on the campus.

By the time the next basketball season arrived, the war had taken its toll. Significantly, the *Gettysburgian* began devoting more columnar space to the interclass games. The varsity outfit won only five of its twelve games in 1917-1918, but in the first postwar season it had recovered sufficiently from the wartime difficulties to win nine games while losing only five. At season's end, the squad elected Earl Ziegler '21 captain for the following year because, as the *Gettysburgian* put it, he was "possibly the most experienced man on the team [and] used good headwork, is a fast and dependable player, and is never known to quit."<sup>98</sup>

As spring approached each year the *Gettysburgian* undertook the task of spurring student interest in track, calling for candidates to try out for the team and appealing for greater general student support. In early 1911 it reminded its readers that the



**James E. Mahaffie '16**  
*Basketball Scoring Ace*



**Earl E. Ziegler '21**  
*Defensive Basketball Stalwart*

<sup>96</sup>The 1921 *Spectrum* (p. 188) credits Gettysburg in 1919 with winning but eight of the nine games. However, in reporting the ninth game that year, the *Gettysburgian* of June 11 referred to an undefeated season. Indeed, these two student publications disagreed (as they had in previous years) on the number of baseball games played and won. For some reason, the 1921 *Spectrum* stated that as the College had closed early in 1918, no games were played that spring. Yet, the *Gettysburgian* carried accounts of all four games, one with Mt. St. Mary's and one each with the "Heavy Tankers," the Engineers," and the "American Chain Company" of York.

<sup>97</sup>The team's 659 point total meant a 41.1 point average per game. Mahaffie registered an 18.8 scoring average, compiled in part because he was the team's designated foul shooter.

<sup>98</sup>This recognition came despite Ziegler's lack of scoring ability. As a "stationary guard," he played four years of varsity basketball without scoring a single point. Hen Bream, a teammate, remembers that in Ziegler's final game in his senior year his mates maneuvered him into position to score on several occasions. Ziegler finally took two shots, missed them both, and, exclaiming, "To hell with it," retreated back to his guard position, content with sticking to his defensive work.



Athletic Council had reduced the number of points needed for tracksters to win the coveted "G". On March 30 the faculty also lent a hand by resolving that "track athletes be put on the same basis as Base-Ball, &c., as pertains to allowed cuts." On May 11 the faculty took the rare action of suspending classes for the afternoon of May 31, the date of a Gettysburg-Bucknell dual meet scheduled for Nixon Field.

How much all this contributed to the health of intercollegiate track at Gettysburg during the decade may be judged from the fact that in those years Gettysburg's track teams proved their right to be considered competitive. The Orange and Blue "thin-clads" won eleven of fourteen dual meets against the likes of Bucknell, Delaware, Dickinson, Juniata, Muhlenberg, and F. & M. On two occasions the mile relay team placed first in its class at Philadelphia's Penn Relays, and in the several state intercollegiate meets the squad made a very creditable showing.

Most memorable were the feats of individual athletes. In 1912 Doyle Leathers was the leading performer. He was the first Gettysburgian to compete with honor in the 100-yard dash event at the Penn Relays. Although he failed to qualify for the final, he gained a fourth place in the qualifying heat in a race so close that, as the May 1 *Gettysburgian* reported, "the first and last runners being separated by a distance of not more than two feet."

Much of the credit for the success of the 1914 track team belonged to one young athlete, Howard Bostock. This talented young man deserves to have his name inscribed alongside those of "Polly" Sieber and Eddie Plank in the Pantheon of Gettysburg's athletic heroes of those prewar years. In 1914, while still enrolled in the College's Preparatory Department, Bostock covered the 100-yard dash in 9.8 seconds; that mark stood until 1965 when Don Ardinger '67 was timed at 9.5 seconds in this event. In the 1915 Gettysburg-Delaware meet, Bostock, then a freshman, recorded a time of 21.4 seconds in the 200-yard dash, a time not bettered by a Gettysburg sprinter until Ardinger did it with 21.3 seconds during the 1966 season. Bostock also paced the 1915 mile relay team to victory in the Penn Relays, covering his quarter-mile leg in 50.2 seconds. This record lasted until 1942 when Wayne Bucher '44 raced the distance in 49 seconds flat in a meet with Haverford.<sup>99</sup> One of Bostock's track records still stands—the 23 feet 3 1/2 inches he leaped in the broad jump against Bucknell in his freshman year.

But this stellar athlete had help from teammates in leading Gettysburg to track honors. The other members of the winning mile relay team at the Penn

Relays in both 1914 and 1915 were Edgar Eyer '15, Ordean Rockey '16, and Harry Matz '17. Rockey went on to become one of the College's two Rhodes Scholars in that period. Nor did Bostock set the only track record which lasted for some years. While still a Preparatory Department student, Thomas H. Nixon '15 broke the high jump mark and as an undergraduate repeated the performance in each of four successive years. In his senior year he achieved a height of 5 feet 8 3/4 inches.

Bostock left the campus at the end of his freshman year, but the winning tradition in track continued. The 1916 team defeated both Delaware and Bucknell in dual meets, and the fact that the mile relay team fared ill at the Penn Relays hardly ruined the season. However, as the 1917 season neared, track, like the other spring sports, felt the impact of American involvement in the First World War. While dual triumphs were registered over both Bucknell and Delaware, no relay team was entered at Philadelphia that year because, as the *Gettysburgian* explained, "the materials for the quarter-mile did not come up to expectations."

Although almost a total casualty of the war, track survived sufficiently on the campus to produce a makeshift aggregation in 1918 which outran a Camp Colt team 68-13 before losing to the Carlisle Indians by a 75-51 score. In 1919, the first postwar season, a Leathers-coached track team inaugurated a resumption of relations with Dickinson with a decisive victory over the Red and White team. It administered a similar defeat to the F. & M. squad. A measure of Gettysburg's superiority in these two meets is seen in the fact that Dickinson and F. & M. combined could capture but three first places in the two dozen events.

Perhaps one index of the progress realized in track at Gettysburg, qualitatively at least, were the superior marks set during the 1910-1919 years compared with those of earlier track athletes. In every particular except the mile-relay mark of 3:40, set in 1908 by Clarence Raby, Zenas Fiscus, H. Stanley Pownall, and Edmund Manges,<sup>100</sup> trackmen of the later period bettered the marks set by their predecessors. It could be said with truth that Gettysburg's intercollegiate track program had survived successfully the adolescent years of the College's sports efforts.

The success of the track teams was matched by that of the College's tennis enthusiasts. These athletes more than held their own in intercollegiate competition. In nine years of contending with their foes, the netmen won twenty-one matches while

losing nineteen. One of their members, Spurgeon M. Keeny '14 demonstrated enough ability athletically as well as academically to receive a Rhodes Scholarship.

Yet, the court game never received the recognition sought by the annual campaigns mounted in the columns of the *Gettysburgian*. The issue of March 26, 1919 found the editors calling for acknowledgement of the contributions tennis players had made to the athletic reputation of the College. "Many of the larger colleges," they claimed, "are awarding the same letter to varsity tennis men as to football, basketball, and baseball men." In the opinion of the writer, this demonstrated that elsewhere there was a ready understanding of "the increasing importance of tennis as a major sport." The same issue of the paper reported that the tennis team would now have a coach. Captain Tracey Tuthill, Commandant of the R.O.T.C. Detachment, and said to have been a tennis star during his student days at Oberlin, would tutor the racket-wielders and "the fine weather during the past week has aroused the thoughts of tennis enthusiasts toward that inviting sport."

Those Gettysburg undergraduates who had entertained their Dickinson counterparts that fall day in 1879 in the contest labeled "Foot-Ball" could hardly have foreseen the expansion in athletics on the campus in the next forty years. Despite the difficulties encountered, intercollegiate athletics by 1919 had become a permanent and prominent part of student existence at Gettysburg. The program had survived and surmounted the obstacles raised by critical clerics, the often excessively concerned faculty, and apathy on the part of a considerable segment of the student body. Perhaps the ingrained conservatism of all these groups, plus the scarcity of funds, prevented the program from getting "Otto-bounds" to the discredit of the College. At any event, as the "Roaring Twenties" arrived, Gettysburg College's sports program had a firm foundation, and all concerned looked forward optimistically to what the coming years would bring.

<sup>99</sup>Ardinger holds the current 440-yard dash—48.6 seconds which he set in 1967. His 9.4 seconds in the 100-yard dash also is the existing record.

<sup>100</sup>Although the *Gettysburgian* (April 30, 1913) stated that the 1913 quartet had finished third at Penn Relays with a recorded time of "probably 3:38," this mark was never entered in the records.



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## Bibliography

WRITING in the 1899 *Spectrum*, a student pointed to "the comparatively meagre . . . material for data" on the beginnings of Gettysburg College's athletic program. "Athletic spirit may have been as much alive as now," he guessed, but he lamented that "there is no record of it."

Nevertheless, sources existed which could have provided this student with useful information on the matter. Of particular value are the minutes of both the board of trustees and the faculty. They shed light on what those two governing bodies did, when they did it, and often one can infer from them why they did it. Perhaps in 1899 these minutes were classified documents and thus denied to undergraduate investigators. Today, however, they are deposited in the office of the College Bursar and were available to the writer of this chronicle.

Also available are the files of various campus publications for the dates covered by this narrative. Largely a spokesman for the faculty and alumni, the *Pennsylvania College Monthly* from February 1879 through December 1893 is shelved in the Gettysburgiana Room of the College Library. More representative of student opinion were the monthly *College Mercury* for the dates April 1893 through July 1897 and the weekly *Gettysburgian* from March 9, 1897 to June 11, 1919. These two journals also may be found in the Gettysburgiana Room, as well as copies of the annual college yearbook, *The Spectrum*, beginning with the 1892 edition.

Among the unpublished senior history theses in the Gettysburgiana Room are three that deal with some aspect of the growth of intercollegiate athletics at the College. They were submitted by Richard E. Coub '31, Alfred E. Morse '31, and Robert Peeling '53.

Among the most pleasurable hours spent by this writer in preparing this history were those in interviewing three distinguished alumni, all of whom participated in athletics at the College during their undergraduate days. All three were generous with their time as they patiently submitted to questioning. Dr. John B. Zinn '08, Colonel Thomas H. Nixon '15, and Henry T. "Hen" Bream '24 filled in gaps and clarified many uncertain points, and their individual reminiscences constitute invaluable testimony.

Samuel G. Hefelbower's *The History of Gettysburg College, 1832-1932* (1932) is totally unsatisfactory in its treatment of the athletic side of the story. It does provide useful background on the growth of the College and the general atmosphere which prevailed on the campus during the period covered by this narrative.

Five volumes in *The History of American Life* series proved useful in assessing the place of intercollegiate athletics in American society as a backdrop for the Gettysburg story. They include Carl R. Fish's *The Rise of the Common Man* (New York, 1927), Arthur C. Cole's *The Inexplicable Conflict* (New York, 1934), Allan Nevins' *The Emergence of Modern America* (New York, 1927), Arthur M. Schlesinger's *The Rise of the City* (New York, 1933), and Harold U. Faulkner's *The Quest for Social Justice* (New York, 1931).

Intercollegiate sports as an integral, if often distracting, aspect of academia in America are treated in more detail in John S. Brubacher and Willis Rudy, *Higher Education in Transition: An American History* (1958); in Frederick Rudolph's scholarly *The American College and University: A History* (1962); and in Ernest Earnest's delightfully written *Academic Procession: An Informal History of the American College* (1953). For the intercollegiate athletic front in Pennsylvania, Saul Sack's two-volume *History of Higher Education in Pennsylvania* (1963) offered a number of valuable nuggets.

Three histories of Gettysburg's sister colleges proved helpful. James H. Morgan's *Dickinson College, 1783-1933* (1933) was useful, although it has been superseded by Charles Coleman Sellers' *Dickinson College: A History* (1973). Also consulted was Lewis E. Theiss' *Centennial History of Bucknell University, 1846-1946* (1946).

Statistical data providing both information and a basis for comparison were found in the *Ronald Encyclopedia of Football* (1961), edited by Harold Classen; in Frank G. Menke, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Sports* (1953); in David S. Neft, ed., *The Sports Encyclopedia: Baseball* (1974); and in *The Official Encyclopedia of Baseball* (1956), edited by Hy Turkin and S. G. Thompson. An exceedingly useful and handy reference work was the *Gettysburg College 1975 Football Guide* compiled by Robert Kenworthy.

For the remaining sources used the reader is referred to the footnote references found in each of the seven chapters of this history.