The Official Newsletter of the PFRA

The Coffin Corner

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Vol. II, No. 12

December, 1980

THE MUGGING OF BOBBY LAYNE

By Bob Braunwart & Bob Carroll, Based in part on material supplied by Dr. Lawrence E. Ziewacz

On days when things are a little slow around the newsroom, any sportswriter worth his clichés can always pound out a couple of thousand words decrying the violence in football. Of course, the game has given out plenty of ammunition.

Item: In a football game between two black teams at Mt. Vernon, N.Y., in 1902, a defensive back threatened an oncoming running back with a knife. When the ball carrier crossed the goal line, he was stabbed.

Item: In 1905, football was nearly outlawed as "too violent." Newspapers across the country printed a weekly toll of dead and maimed. Only rule changes stemming from a Presidential conference saved the game.

Item: The Rock Island Argus of November 8, 1920, headlined "Staleys Win World's Dirt Title" after four Rock Islanders were kayoed during a tie with Decatur. In one incident, Rock Island's Hal Gunderson was nearly killed when the Staley's George Trafton "slid across his face."

In 1956, as pro football was first finding national headlines consistently, a flap took place at Wrigley Field in Chicago that seemed to make the game look quite bloodthirsty. Yet, following the dictum that the only bad publicity is none at all, the incident may well have actually fueled the pro football fever that has gripped the country for the past 25 years.

As a flap, it had all you could ask for. It involved one of the

great players of all time, and -- according to one side -- it decided the Western Division championship.

The Detroit Lions had broken away from the starting blocks like a shot in 1956, winning their first six games. They were driven by the inspirational leadership of their firebrand quarterback Bobby Layne, one of the first great come-from-behind QBs. According to his former teammate Doak Walker, "Bobby never lost a game in his life. Time just ran out on him." To a man, the Lions believed in Layne --"When Bobby said block, you blocked. When Bobby said drink, you drank." They knew that as long as they could get him the ball, Detroit was still in any game.

The Chicago Bears followed fast on the Lions' heels. Paddy Driscoll had replaced George Halas as on-field coach in one of Papa Bear's several retirements, and, after an opening game loss at Baltimore, the Bears moved into high gear to reel off seven straight victories. When "time ran out" on Bobby Layne at Washington in the Lions' seventh outing, Chicago and Detroit were tied for the Western Division lead.

The Bears moved into first place alone the Sunday after Thanksgiving when they came from behind to tie the New York Giants, 17-17. On the Thursday before, Detroit had been upset by Green Bay, 24-20.

Neither team had yet played the other.

However, that small conceit by the schedule-maker was rectified when Chicago went to Detroit on December 2. The Lions proved less-than-gracious hosts, bombing their rivals, 42-10, and moving back into first place. If the score represented a true reflection of the two squads abilities, the race seemed over.

The next week, the Lions continued on their merry way by drubbing Pittsburgh, 45-7. Meanwhile, the Bears struggled in edging the lowly crosstown Cardinals, 10-3. Although the Bears had a mathematical chance to move past the Lions in their regular-season ender at Wrigley Field, unless they could find a way to stop Bobby Layne, they did not really need to show up.

Of course, the Bears did show up at Wrigley, and, as every sports fan across the nation learned on Monday morning, they found a way to stop Bobby Layne.

Detroit had the ball in the second quarter, trailing 3-0 but seemingly ready to move. Layne took the snap from center, stepped back and pitched the ball to a sweeping running back. Then he turned to watch the play unfold.

Suddenly, the lights went out.

What had happened was that 220 pounds of Bear defensive end, all of it named Ed Meadows, had blindsided Bobby with enough force to level any reasonably well-constructed brick building. Bobby was down and out for the count. They carried him off the field, through for the day with a concussion.

His substitute, Harry Gilmer, put up a good fight, throwing two touchdown passes, but, without Layne, the Lions were not the same team. The final score reflected an easy Bear victory, 38-21.

The Lions roared foul, both after the play and after the game. Meadows, they insisted, had cut down their star with an illegal, unsporting, and infamous attack.

Meadows reputation didn't help his case. More than once he'd been accused of trying to hurt his own teammates in scrimmages. "This isn't the first time he's tried rough stuff," said Detroit club president Edwin J. Anderson. In truth, Meadows possessed a larger reputation for hatchet jobs around the NFL than had George Washington around cherry trees. Ironically, the Bears' end had in fact been ejected from the Lions game, but later -- for fighting -- while Bobby Layne was on his back at the hospital.

So much for circumstantial evidence. Meadows stuck to his story that he hadn't seen Layne get rid of the ball. If he hadn't, said Layne, he was "the only guy in the whole stadium who didn't know."

Lion coach Buddy Parker was more blunt. "Why didn't Meadows bring a blackjack?" he asked.

Bert Bell, president of the NFL, after a brief investigation,cleared Meadows and the Bears of any intentional wrongdoing. This led to charges that the league office was really being run by Halas with Bell as his puppet.

Both Halas and Meadows threatened to sue, but somehow never found the time as they readied themselves for their upcoming championship game with New York. Lion fans insisted that their team would have been in that game except for the "mugging." No doubt, as they watched the game on TV, they cheered the Giants who obligingly won, 47-7, in one of the most one-sided of championships.

Amid all the charges and counter charges, one interesting piece of historical trivia surfaced when a former Los Angeles player revealed that the 51-53 Rams had a get-the-quarterback pool in which a cash award went to the player who knocked the rival QB out of the game.

Old pro Greasy Neale, who had coached in the NFL for ten years, summed up the prevailing feeling among most of the pros: "All you've got to remember is that once you step out on the field, it's every man for himself."

Meadows played three more years. Layne played six. Parker went on. Halas went on and on and on. The incident receded in memory before the thrill of new touchdowns, only to be trotted out as "evidence" every time a new controversy came along.

Item: In 1960, Chuck Bednarik of the Eagles put Frank Gifford out for a year with a prodigious shot that many Giants termed a "cheap shot."

Item: In 1976, George Atkinson of Oakland belted Pittsburgh's Lynn Swann into the hospital with a crack while Swann was not the pass receiver. The whole thing ended up in a libel suit.

Item: In 1979, New England receiver Darryl Stingley was put into a wheelchair for life, the result of a hit by Oakland's Jack Tatum.

Item: In 1980, Mike Hartenstine of the Chicago Bears was fined by the league after blindsiding Ron Jaworski of Philadelphia.

No one ever seems to have much good to say about violence, yet the TV camera instant-replays examples again and again in slo-mo and glorious living color. Fans wince or cheer or both. Sometimes they cheer most lustily when one of the players doesn't get up. It's a rough game,we say.

Each time a new rule is passed to try to save a knee or a rib, we mutter about how "they're ruining the game." We laughed when Jack Lambert suggested they put skirts on quarterbacks.

Item: To be continued each season.

KEN HAYCRAFT REMEMBERS THE WAY IT WAS

By James E. Odenkirk

Little has been written about the behind-the-scenes events which caused professional football in the 1930's to grow and receive an ever-widening basis of support from American sports fans. This early development of pro football is highlighted with a description of the brief, but eventful pro career of one Ken Haycraft, All-American end at the University of Minnesota in 1928. Subsequently, Haycraft's playing days extended to the Minneapolis Red Jackets, the Green Bay Packers, and finally, a local semi-professional team in Minneapolis.

A brief overview of Haycraft's playing career represents a microcosm of the trials and tribulations of the early development of professional football. In several ways, his career was quite different from modern-day norms. First of all, he did not play football at his high school, Central High School in Washington, D.C. Then, he did not go out for the football team his freshman year at the University of Minnesota in 1924. However, in 1925, he became a so-called "walk-on" candidate for the team. His coach, Dr. Clarence Spears, who helped to revive football at the University of Minnesota prior to the Golden Gopher era of Bernie Bierman, encouraged Haycraft to try out for the team, where he played sparingly as a substitute tackle. But Haycraft, six feet tall and weighing 175 pounds, showed Coach Spears enough football savvy to be retained on the team in 1926. Eventually, the "walk-on" played regularly on Minnesota's undefeated team of 1927 and earned the honor of being selected to Grantland Rice's All-American team in 1928.

In the fall of 1929, some ex-collegiate players in the Minneapolis area formulated plans to enter a professional team, the Minneapolis Red Jackets, in the National Football League. Franchises were being added, dropped or moved to other cities frequently during this period of development in the NFL. Val Ness, a butcher, and John Dunn, a postal clerk, provided the necessary money for a Minneapolis franchise in good standing, a total of $2500. Although an insignificant figure by modern-day standards, this was a considerable increase from the original entry fee of $100 in 1920.

The team was coached by George Gibson, an All-American guard at Minnesota. Haycraft assisted.

A professional team was composed of not more than eighteen players, since this era preceded the two-platoon system. Naturally, players were expected to play both offense and defense and at least two positions. Games were sixty minutes in length, as in present-day games, and the contests were played in minor league or major league baseball parks where a rental fee was assessed for the use of the park. League teams, such as the Brooklyn Dodgers, Chicago Bears, Chicago Cardinals, Frankford Yellow Jackets, Green Bay Packers, New York Giants, Newark Tornadoes, Portsmouth Spartans, Providence Steam Roller, and the Staten Island Stapletons,were located throughout the Midwest and along the Eastern Coast. Travel was mainly by train, although ships were sometimes used to transport teams along the Eastern seaboard and from New York City to Providence, Rhode Island.

Schedules consisted of approximately sixteen games, including a maximum of four exhibition games. Haycraft received $100 per game during the 1929 season, plus $25 per game for coaching the team. Crowds of 5,000 were considered average at this time, except for games involving Red Grange and the Chicago Bears, which might attract anywhere from 10,000 to 35,000 spectators, depending on the size of the baseball park. Generally, admission prices were $2.00 for adults and $1.00 for children, a far cry from the cost today. Players were provided food and lodging while traveling to another city. Normally, gate receipts were split on a 60-40 basis, with the home team retaining 60% of the gate.

The Red Jackets completed their first season in 1929, winning only one game. The club finished in the "red" financially, but not far from breaking even, primarily because of three games with the Chicago Bears.

As the 1930 season approached, the Red Jackets planned to play their four home games in October at Nicollet Park in Minneapolis. They hoped for good weather in October in Minnesota, thus stimulating better attendance. Unfortunately, it either rained or snowed on each scheduled date and the team went broke. It is reported that Val Ness, one of the financial backers of the team, believed his butcher shop also suffered financially as a result of his venture.

By now the Depression had taken a heavy toll and efforts to rescue the Red Jackets were fruitless. So ten of the players were sold to the Frankford Yellow Jackets, and three players, including Haycraft, were sold to the Green Bay Packers.

Here, Haycraft was associated with a first-rate operation, coached by the flamboyant Curly Lambeau. The smallest lineman on the team, he was teamed with huge Cal Hubbard, member of the Pro Football Hall of Fame and later a famous baseball umpire.

The average lineman's pay at Green Bay was $75.00 a game. It was reported that Mike Michalske, another member of the HOF, earned six dollars for every minute he played in a game. These figures, even in a non-inflationary period, are a far cry from modern-day salaries. The Packers possessed a broader base of financial backing because they were a community-owned franchise.

Unfortunately for Haycraft, the Packers were detected by a league official to be carrying 22 players, instead of the maximum of 18. This caused him to be released, along with three others, after he had appeared in only one game for the Pack.

He attempted to sign with the Portsmouth Spartans for 1931. George "Potsy" Clark, former backfield coach at Minnesota, had been named coach there, but the deal fell through. Thus ended Haycraft's career in the NFL.

He returned to Minneapolis to pursue a law degree at the University of Minnesota. There he organized a semi-professional football team, in which he was owner, general manager, coach, and player. Using only thirteen players, the team played in a semi-pro league for six seasons during the peak of the Depression, against other teams from Minnesota and the neighboring states of Wisconsin, Iowa, and Ill-

inois. During this time, Haycraft earned his law degree from the University of Minnesota.

One highlight of his team's history was an exhibition game played against the Chicago Bears in 1935. The Bears, coached by George Halas and featuring Haycraft's former college teammate Bronko Nagurski, were given all the opposition they desired before winning 14-3. After 1936, Haycraft severed his relationship with the All-Stars, to devote more time to his law practice.

Looking back, Haycraft reflected that the quality of play would be hard to compare with the modern-day game, except that it was his opinion that players were in better condition in the earlier days. The limited number of team players (18) placed great stress on conditioning. The coaching strategy was to substitute frequently and have as many fresh players ready for the final quarter as possible. A scoring lead was always in jeopardy in the fourth quarter.

Basic offensive strategy centered around the single-wing, double-wing, and short punt formations. Defenses were basic, consisting of a five or six man line and a minimum of "stunting" or "blitzing," and generally, the defensive center or middle guard, who was strong, fast, and agile, was at liberty to move anywhere he wished on any play.

This early era did not lack for great football players. Bronko Nagurski, generally considered to be the greatest player to don a uniform at the University of Minnesota, was sought by the Red Jackets in 1930 but signed a contract for $5,000 to play with the Bears instead. Haycraft considered Nagurski, Grange, Ken Strong, Cal Hubbard, and Ernie Nevers as the top players he either played with or against. His viewpoint carried an element of validity, for he played against fourteen of the first seventeen members selected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

A pro football player's endurance and stamina were often taxed. Haycraft recalled playing a game in Frankford, Pennsylvania, on a Saturday, then traveling by train to New York City to play Ken Strong and the Staten Island team on Sunday. Games were played on Saturday in Pennsylvania because of strict Blue Laws which did not permit professional sports on Sunday.

While in New York City, the team stayed in a first class hotel near Central Park. The players dressed in their uniforms while in their rooms, then walked from their hotel to Central Park in tennis shoes and practiced, often to the delight of pedestrians.

Haycraft doubled as trainer for the Red Jackets on road trips. For home games, Lloyd Stern, the trainer at the University of Minnesota, would be on duty for taping and first-aid purposes. A doctor was either in the stands or on call.

Playing equipment was not fancy. Leather helmets were standard, but faceguards were non-existent. If, by chance, a player suffered a broken nose, a leather face guard was taped on his face during the game, but this was a nuisance. The player perspired and the protective guard would come loose.

Shoulder pads were made of leather and were heavier than modern pads. Leather and fiber hip pads were worn and thigh pads were either inserted within the duckcloth pants or taped directly to the legs. The jersies were made of woolen materials.

Shoes were leather and of the high cut style to help prevent ankle injuries. Three types of cleats were used: leather cleats shaped in a triangle, regular rubber cleats, and mud cleats which were longer and made out of rubber in a cone-like shape.

Taping of the uniform was legal and players were also permitted to tape hard, fibrous materials to the arms for protection. The forearm lift was legal for a defensive player and was an effective way for a smaller defensive player to move a larger opponent off balance.

Haycraft, who could reflect from both the intercollegiate and professional viewpoint, believed that pro football was not as "dirty" as the college game in the late 1920's and early 1930's. Although early stories reported that George Trafton of the Chicago Bears used some disreputable tactics, generally a player's own teammates would tell a player like Trafton to "clean it up," lest he aggravate the opposing team into a slugfest. No team could afford to have a player ejected from the game.

At this time, intercollegiate play in the Big Ten Conference was like warfare, where efforts were made to harm key players and force them out of the game. However, Haycraft insisted that one celebrated incident -- a shoulder injury Red Grange incurred during the third quarter of the Minnesota-Illinois game of 1924 -- was legitimate and not an act of "dirty play." Grange was forced to leave the game and Minnesota won 20-7.

Overall, the officiating was good. Four officials were assigned to a game, usually one head official from the league office and three officials from the home team's community. Fees for working a game approximated $50.00. Haycraft did not speak as highly of collegiate officiating, where constant reports of being "homered" circulated throughout the Big Ten.

By 1930, the passing game had improved significantly, opening up a more offensive style of football. Coaches were not overly scientific in their game plans. It was Haycraft's judgment that the renowned Lambeau was more a "manager" than "coach" of the Green Bay Packers.

In the one game he played for Green Bay, the Packers were upset by the Cardinals, largely, Haycraft believed, due to Lambeau's questionable coaching strategy. Curly insisted that his men play a "diverging" defense. Such stategy would stop the Cardinal's reverse from the Warner double wing formation but would also not tighten up the defense in the middle of the line. Adjustments weren't made and Ernie Nevers made huge gains up the middle, helping the Cardinals win 13-6 before 10,000 spectators.

It was Haycraft's opinion that in the 1920's one did not have to play football in high school to be successful in college play, citing himself as one of many examples. He believed that modern day coaches concentrate so heavily on the boys who receive the headlines and are selected to All-Star teams that nonexperienced athletes or walk-on students are too frequently ignored or shunted to the sidelines.

In retrospect, pro football in the late 1920's and early 1930's reflected an aspect of the American sporting scene which was exciting, entertaining, and almost unbelievable in some respects, by present-day standards. The modern game provides the viewer with many instant thrills, but, in its own way, the younger and less sophisticated game of fifty years ago provided its own colorful and interesting spectacle.

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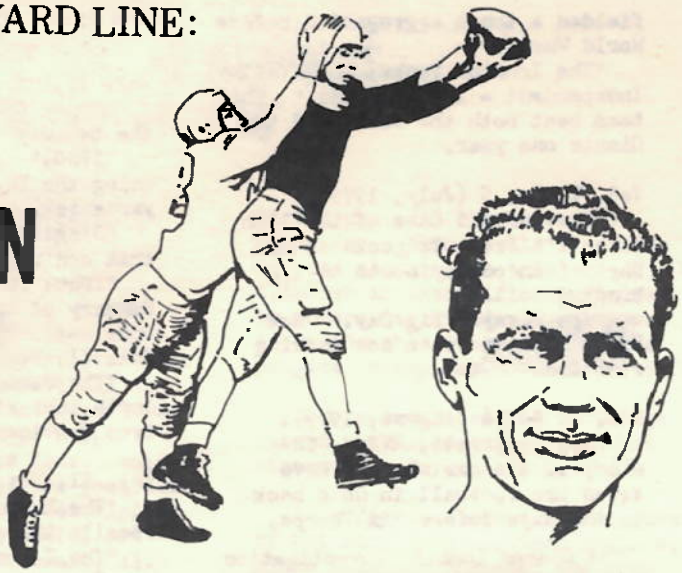
James E. Odenkirk is Chairman of the Department of Physical Education at Arizona State University.

ON THE 50-YARD LINE:

HUTSON

BRINGS DOWN THE HOUSE!



By Pat Livingston

The Steelers' rookie was upset. An All-America in a pro camp, he couldn't get over how the Green Bay Packers had walloped a great College All-Star team, 45-28, because the Stars didn't have a defense to stop a Packer receiver, Don Hutson, short of the goal line.

The rookie was Merlyn Condit, the finest running back who ever played at Carnegie Tech, getting ready for practice. As Tex Mayhew, the trainer, taped Condit's ankles, the Tartan grad confessed he was disillusioned in his debut against the pros.

"There's no excuse for a receiver to get open like that," Condit grumbled to Mayhew and Walt Kiesling, the Steelers' coach. "You can't tell me a good back, if he sets his mind to it, can't cover a receiver. Nobody's so good that somebody can't cover him."

"No one man can cover Don Hutson," shrugged the phlegmatic Kiesling. "The way you play Hutson, you double-team him -- or shoot him." Mayhew, strapping another strip of tape on Condit's ankle, agreed with the coach.

"Well, when we play the Packers, I'll cover Hutson," volunteered Condit. "He won't catch all those passes on me."

Kiesling and Mayhew traded glances, smiling at each other.

A couple of weeks later, in a game against the Steelers, Hutson caught the first 10 passes thrown his way. The Packers, who with the Chicago Bears dominated the NFL in those days, had the Steelers bagged by halftime.

Now this is not to embarrass Condit, a brilliant pro, but to recall the excellence of Hutson, the one player who, more than any other, symbolizes the Green Bay Packers.

Hutson, the finest receiver I've ever seen, is the innovator who did more than anyone else to make pro football the wide-open game it became.

Single-handedly, Hutson, the receiver who invented such routes as the z-in and z-out, the button hook, the comeback and the hook-and-go, brought sophisticated passing to football. In a defensive game, he was the prototype offensive end.

Don't look for him in the record books, for most of the marks he established are gone. Hutson played in an era when NFL schedules called for 10 or 12 games a season, rather than the 14 and 16 of modern times.

He never caught 600 passes, as receivers like Charley Taylor, Don Maynard or Raymond Berry did, but were you to extend his four-catch-per-game average to the number of games these fellows played, Hutson would be the only receiver in history to have caught 700.

And no receiver in the NFL, no matter how long he played, ever matched the 105 touchdowns Hutson -- often the only receiver in the pattern -- scored during his 11 years with the Pack.

I got to thinking about Hutson. Unlike Berry, who is associated with Johnny Unitas, or Taylor, who dredges up memories of Sonny Jurgensen, Hutson dominated quarterbacks whoever they were, Cecil Isbell or Clarke Hinkle. In the '40s in the NFL, he was the man. He dazzled the game.

I recall a game while I and my Press city-side colleague, John Place, were at the Navy's midshipmen's school at Northwestern. Hutson, who would score 17 touchdowns that year, was on a streak, scoring a touchdown or more in an impressive string of games.

This game involved the Bears. Two years before, the Bears had walloped the Redskins, 73-0, and had lost only to the Pack, 16-14 -- on a Don Hutson field goal, of course -- during an incredible streak of 28 games. Wrigley Field was jammed. Although he couldn't get me a ticket, George Halas arranged with his brother, Frank, to pass me through the gate.

As I said, the Bears were awesome. With two minutes to play, they scored their final touchdown, taking a 38-0 lead against the hated Packers. More important to Halas, the Bears had stopped Hutson's touchdown spree -- or had they?

Taking the kickoff, with nothing at stake but Hutson's streak, the beaten Packers started to drive. Throwing on every down, usually to Hutson, Isbell worked the ball in for a first-and-10 around the Chicago 20, with seconds left to play.

The mob was wild. Hutson was trailed by Bears wherever he went. And as Isbell's three passes fell incomplete, the Packers had fourth and 10, some 20 yards short of the end zone, the clock running down.

Then came the most incredible premeditated play I ever saw on a football field. It was no accident. There were no disputes. At its completion, every article that wasn't nailed down came sailing out of the stands. Hutson, the enemy, drew a standing ovation, the wildest demonstration I ever saw bestowed on an antagonist.

Lining up as a flanker, harassed by three Bears, the cagy old Alabamian ran a simple post pattern, diagonally in on the twin-poled uprights, Bears convoying him, stride by stride.

As the four men raced under the bar, Hutson hooked his elbow around the upright, stopped abruptly, flung his body sharply left and left the red-faced Bears scrambling around in their cleats. He stood alone in the end zone as he casually gathered Isbell's throw to his chest.

"I'll never forget that pass," said Harry Clark, the old West Virginia star, when I ran into him a couple of months ago. "How could I?

"Halas was fit to be tied," recalled Clark, one of Chicago's defenders on the play. "He sent us in there, three of us, expressly to cover Hutson. That's all we had to do. Oh, were we sick.

"Do you know who the other defenders were?" asked Clark as an after-thought.

I didn't recall.

Clark smiled. "Dante Magnani and George McAfee," said he. "Could you pick any defenders better than them?"

* * *

Pat Livingston, sports editor of the Pittsburgh Press where this column first appeared, is among the country's most respected pro football authorities.

"Glenn Dobbs." A great triple-threat from below and above the border.

"Women's Professional Football." A quick look at the ladies' league.

"Iron Men ... & Iron Words." In the old days they were tough and talked that way.

"6 by Sayers." Eyewitness at a record breaking performance.

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"The Spartans Live On (In Detroit)." History of a fabled franchise.

"Football Players Are Better Than Ever, Right?" A close look at why so many records are being set.

"Wm. 'Bullet Bill' Dudley." His statistical record.

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"The First AFL Game." An in-depth look at the origin of "the other league."

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Additionally, P.F.R.A. published its first Annual in June of 1980, a volume that allowed for longer, in-depth articles. Copies are available at the same address for $5 each. The contents included the following:

"Before the Beginning." Providing a brief history of football's ancestry.

"Latrobe, Pa.: Cradle of Pro Football." The definitive account of the first fully professional football team in North America.

"Dave Berry and the Philadelphia Story." Account of the first organized pro league in 1902.

"Tom O'Rourke's World Series." in 1902 and 1903 they played pro football indoors in New York.

"1919: Last Year of the Ohio League." The end of this unofficial group brought the beginning of the NFL.

"All-Time Major-League Rushing Records." Combined Canadian and American stats.

"Pictures." Charts showing several trends throughout NFL history.

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The Coffin Corner has been privileged to publish several articles on "Firsts" in pro football history, including such important stories as Milt Roberts' account of Charles Follis, the first black pro, and Larry Bortstein's tracing of the first AFL game. We would like to see more of this. Members are invited to put forth their nominees for both important and not-so-important firsts. We will be happy to publish them on these pages. Undoubtedly, some heated arguments will be forthcoming.

* * *

Speaking of firsts, Vic Frolund sent in this delicious piece. The original source was not given, but it must have been a staunchly Republican newspaper.

"Who was the first person to spike the football after scoring a touchdown?

"According to Duke Russell of Hollywood, Calif., the distinction belongs to Ronald Reagan.

"In the 1940 Warner Bros. movie, 'Knute Rockne, All-American,' Pat O'Brien, playing Rockne, trips over Reagan, who is playing George Gipp, while Gipp is lying along the sideline out of boredom during a Notre Dame practice. They exchange a quick burst of sarcasm and then the legendary coach, trying to teach the upstart freshman a lesson, puts him in at fullback against the varsity.

"On the first play, however, the Gipper runs about 50 yards for a touchdown (no, he wasn't running for the White House) and then vents his feelings in a fashion years ahead of its time.

"Instead of touching the football to the ground, as was the custom in those days, he bounced it with both hands and then nonchalantly caught it.

"Granted, it was a rather conservative spike in comparison with modern end-zone antics. But Russell contends it's still the first spike or, at least, the first recorded on film."

* * *

Lawrence E. Ziewacz, Associate Professor at the Department of American Thought and Language at Michigan State University, who supplied much of the material for the article on the Bobby Layne incident, writes that he and his co-author are just completing research for an article on Violence in Pro Football since the 1950's. It will be included in a reader on sports to be published by the Riverside Press of St. Louis. He is also co-author of The Games They Played: American Sport and Culture, 1865-1980.

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Our staff artist informs us that when he does not have a Coffin Corner assignment, he passes his spare time drawing portraits of other PF stars of the past. He has, he says, about 30 or 40 prepared and awaiting the proper article. His choice of subject is made by whoever catches his fancy on a given day.

We suggested that he might start taking requests, and he agreed.

So, if you would like a print of a particular favorite out of the past, including both a portrait and an action pose, send $2.50 to the Coffin Corner and name your choice. The proceeds will be donated to the P.F.R.A. treasury and you must be satisfied or we will return your money. Allow about one month for delivery because we don't give him that much time off; he also sweeps up.

* * *

PFRA-file

Bob Carroll, editor of the Coffin Corner and Secretary of P.F.R.A., admits to being a dull conversationalist. "If I'm not talking about pro football, particularly pre-1930s pro football, I just don't have much to say. When I talk to people about almost anything else, I have to keep nudging them to keep them awake."

His ability to bore used to prove a liability while he was teaching his high school classes. "However, now I just open my lectures by saying, 'My broker is E.F. Hutton, and E.F. Hutton says ....'"

When not teaching or engaged in PF research, Carroll enjoys directing plays for his local community theater. "I used to act, and I often 'stopped the show' ... dead."

Carroll's penchant for early football once caused P.F.R.A. president Joe Horrigan to remark, "Bob thinks football ended in 1930."

To which Carroll answered, "You mean it didn't! Has anyone researched this?"

* * *

On November 8, 1926, Red Grange and his New York Yankees of the American Football League defeated the Wilson Wildcats, 28-0 at Toronto, Canada. Anyone having information on this game, particularly the substitutes used by both teams and the player or players who made the extra points for the Yankees, is asked to write to the Corner or to Tod Maher, 340 San Benancio Rd., Salinas, Calif., 93908.

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We are happy to welcome Ed Eberle of Buffalo, N.Y. to P.F.R.A.

* * *

Opinion. We are second to none in our admiration for Franco Harris, but we do wish that network announcers would stop referring to him as the third leading rusher in pro history and only the third runner to go over 9,000 yards. How can they forget Joe "The Jet" Perry, who with his two AAFC years and 14 in the NFL gained 9,723 yards?

Submissions are currently being solicited for possible inclusion in P.F.R.A.'s second Annual. Manuscripts may be any length. If possible, they should be typewritten.

Materials are submitted for first publication only; thereafter ownership reverts to the author(s). There is no payment for articles accepted. Original manuscripts will be returned if a stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed with the submission. Neither P.F.R.A. nor any reviewer will make any use of material not accepted for publication without permission of the author(s).

The annual publication will be approximately one hundred pages in length.

Submissions and/or suggestions should be sent to the following address:

Robert Braunwart
5503 Roosevelt Way N.E.
Seattle, WA 98105

Materials should arrive before January 15, 1981, to allow adequate time for duplication, transmittal to reviewers, and review. P.F.R.A. reserves the right to make minor editorial changes in any material accepted.

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The Coffin Corner began publishing in March of 1979, four months before P.F.R.A. was formed. This issue is the 22nd consecutive. Because of the tremendous increase in membership since those first days, many new members may be unaware of some of the subjects covered in past issues. Below are listed the principle research articles printed in each issue. Back issues may be purchased for $1 each by writing to P.F.R.A./ 218 Wise St., N.E./ N. Canton, O./ 44720.

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Vol. I, No. 1 (March, 1979):
"The First All-Star Game." The Pittsburgh pro champs of 1898 took on a selected group of local stars to end the season.

Vol. I, No. 2 (April, 1979):
"All Those A.F.L.'s: N.F.L. Competitors, 1935-41." The late '30s saw several upstarts attempt to challenge the established league.

Vol. I, No. 3 (May, 1979):
"The Tigers in '03." Massillon brought pro football to Ohio and a championship to itself.

Vol. I, No. 4 (June, 1979):
"The Story of the Patrician Football Team." Youngstown, Ohio, fielded a tough aggregation before World War I.
"The Ironton Tanks: Ohio Valley Independent - 1919 to 1931." This team beat both the Bears and the Giants one year.

Vol. I, No. 5 (July, 1979):
"The Curious Case of the 13th Import." Frank Tripucka as the hero of an oddity north of the border.
"Joe Davey's Big Day." How Davey O'Brien set a new passing standard.

Vol. I, No. 6 (August, 1979):
"Peggy Parratt, MVP." The story of the man who may have saved pro football in Ohio back in the days before Jim Thorpe.
"A Closer Look." Investigation into the first pro forward pass.
"Team vs. Team." Charts detailing all present teams' won-loss records against opponents.

Vol. I, No. 7 (September, 1979):
"The Day They Clobbered the Bronk." How Lone Star Dietz set a trap for Nagurski.
"Johnny Blood: The Vagabond Halfback." Profile of an immortal character.
"50-yd DKs." A look at some of the longest drop kicks.

Vol. I, No. 8 (October, 1979):
"Columbus Panhandles." Led by the Nesser brothers, the 'Handles had a long and colorful history.
"Pro Myth?" Do modern teams really need to establish the run first?

Vol. I, No. 9 (November, 1979):
"Ken Strong." He may have been the best player of all time.
"Sutherland." A bow to a great coach.
"Pointmakers." Listing all those who scored more than four TDs in a single game.

Vol. I, No. 10 (December, 1979):
"George McAfee." No one could break away like "One-Play."
"All-American Flops, 1920-32." Some big stars didn't make it as pros.
"Those New Records: What Do They Prove?" Are the moderns that good, or is it hype?
"Bigfoot." Glenn Presnell's record field goal in 1934.

Vol. II, No. 1 (January, 1980):
"Jim Parker." One of the best linemen who ever played.
"All-American Flops, 1933-45." More big college names joined the pros in this period.
"1955." Summary of the season.
"Charles Follis." The story of the first black pro.

Vol. II, No. 2 (February, 1980)
"Chuck Bednarik." The last of the two-way players.
"YPSG." A look at pro stats using the Yards Per Scheduled Game yardstick.
"Singles." The Canadian rule that confuses so many U.S. fans.
"1940: That Wonderful Year." Summary of the season.

Vol. II, No. 3 (March, 1980)
"The Steam Roller." An in-depth look at the one-time champs from Providence.

Vol. II, No. 4 (April, 1980)
"The Executives." Henry Jordan recalls the great days of the Pack.
"The Toronto Argonauts to World War I." History of the beginnings of one of Canada's finest.
"1 Pic = 10,000 Wds." A chart detailing the history of interceptions in the NFL.

Vol. II, No. 5 (May, 1980)
"Dr. Joe: A Guard's Guard." A look at the career of a former all-pro (and P.F.R.A. member) and his contribution to the evolution of equipment.
"The Passing Parade." List of pass record holders.
"James Francis Thorpe." Includes his scoring record.
"1 Pic = 10,000 Wds." A chart on passing attempts throughout NFL history.

Vol. II, No. 6 (June, 1980)
"Red Badgro." This former New York Giant may have been the best two-way end ever.
"The Taylorville Scandal." Did a game between two obscure teams in Illinois cost Green Bay its franchise in the NFL?
"1968." Summary of season.

Vol. II, No. 7 (July, 1980)
"All-America Football Conference." History of an important league.
"Opinion: Pro Football Records Should Include the AAFC." Support for a controversial position.

Vol. II, No. 8 (August, 1980)
"Happy Birthday NFL?" Did the league actually begin earlier than it knows?
"Now Kicking, Kelsch!" This Pittsburgher was probably the first pro specialist.
"Cleveland's 1st Title." How the Canton Bulldogs became Clevelanders.
"The Research Notebook: 1890s." Some tidbits from the distant past.

Vol. II, No. 9 (September, 1980)

KEN HAYCRAFT

ABOUT PFRA:

The Professional Football Researchers Association was founded as a non-profit organization on June 22, 1979, at Canton, Ohio. The purpose of the association is to foster the study of professional football as a significant social and athletic institution. It further hopes to establish an accurate historical account of professional football and to disseminate research information.

Membership in P.F.R.A. is open to anyone with a sincere interest in the history of professional football or related subjects. Members receive: twelve issues of The Coffin Corner, the official newsletter of the P.F.R.A.; the opportunity to submit material to be considered for publication in the newsletter; an end of year Directory of Membership; a specially prepared association publication to be offered at the end of the year at a membership discount; and a P.F.R.A. Membership Card.

To join, write to P.F.R.A./ 218 Wise St., N.E./ N. Canton, O./ 44720.

To help defray operational expenses of the association, reasonable dues of $15 per year have been set.

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