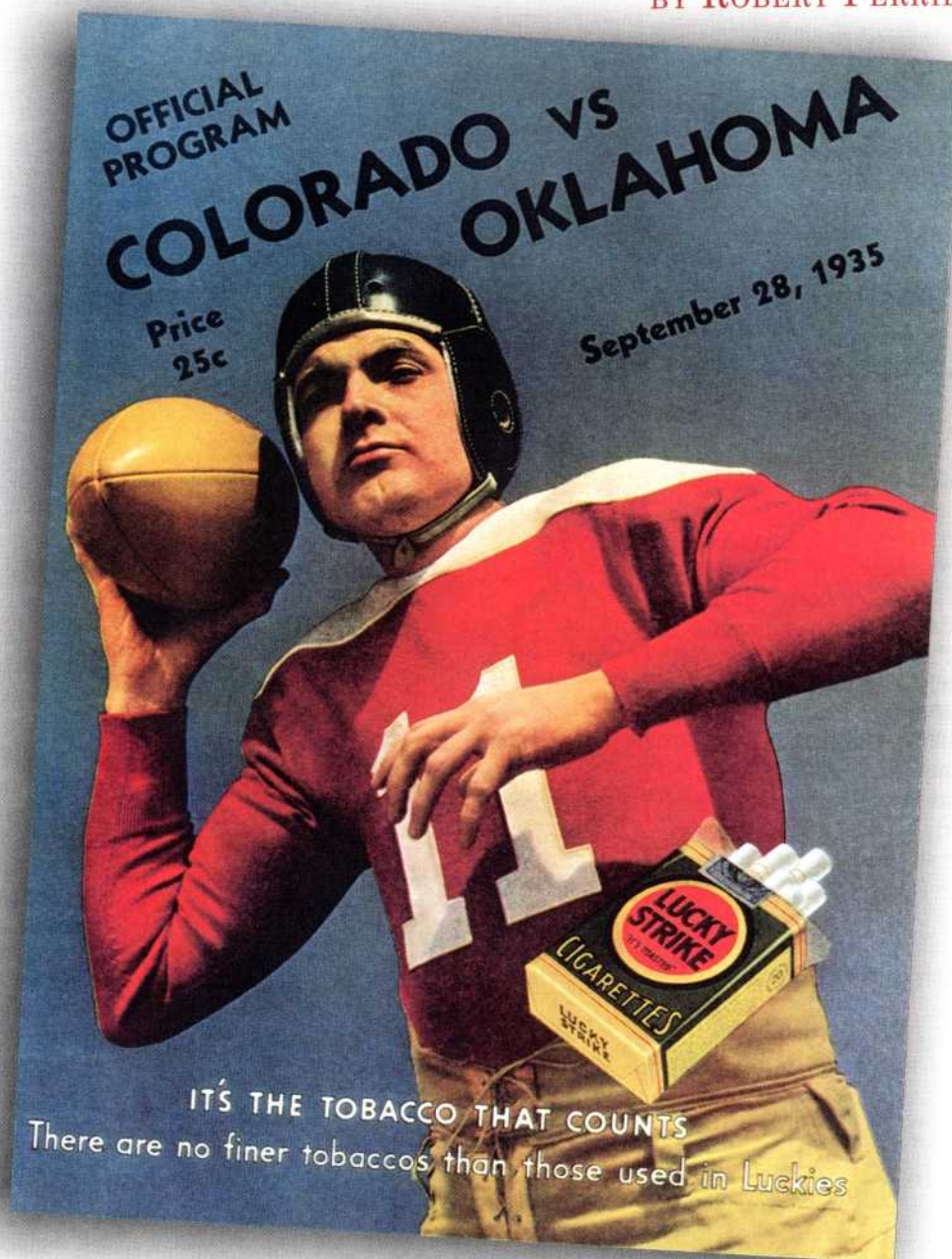


# You Can't Tell the Players Without a Program

BY ROBERT FERRIER

Lucky Strike covers, political promos and patriotism, hand-drawn and agency slick, the football program has had a checkered history.



## From Bennie Owen to Joe Washington . . .

During the months of November and December 1997, sports fans visiting the OU Libraries' Western History Collections were treated to a photographic exhibit spanning 75 years of Sooner football.

The exhibit, "Art, Advertising, Tra-

ditions and Nostalgia: OU Football Programs, 1903-1978," opened Saturday, November 8, before the OU-OSU football game. Visitors to the WHC's Reading Room in 300 Monnet Hall (the former law school building on the east side of the Parrington Oval) viewed displays of game programs, hand-drawn plays from Coach Snorter Luster, and more than enough photos

from the Bud Wilkinson and Barry Switzer years to rekindle memories.

John Lovett, WHC librarian and photo archivist, spent weeks reviewing game programs and photographs. The biggest problem: too many choices.

"I found unique material," he says. "Ironically, in my years as an OU student, I never bought a game program. As I sifted through the ar-

The University of Oklahoma began its football Homecoming tradition with this OU-Kansas game in 1915. Commencement ceremonies had been the University's primary attraction for bringing alumni back to the campus. However, in 1914, Errett R. Newby, OU's registrar and 1908 graduate, suggested using football to encourage old grads to visit the campus. Homecoming celebrations have been an integral part of OU football ever since. OU won this game 23-14.

chives, I found programs that reflected the times: Lucky Strike cigarette ads blended into cover art . . . promotional pieces on political figures like Senator Robert Kerr . . . a homecoming program cut into the shape of a football."

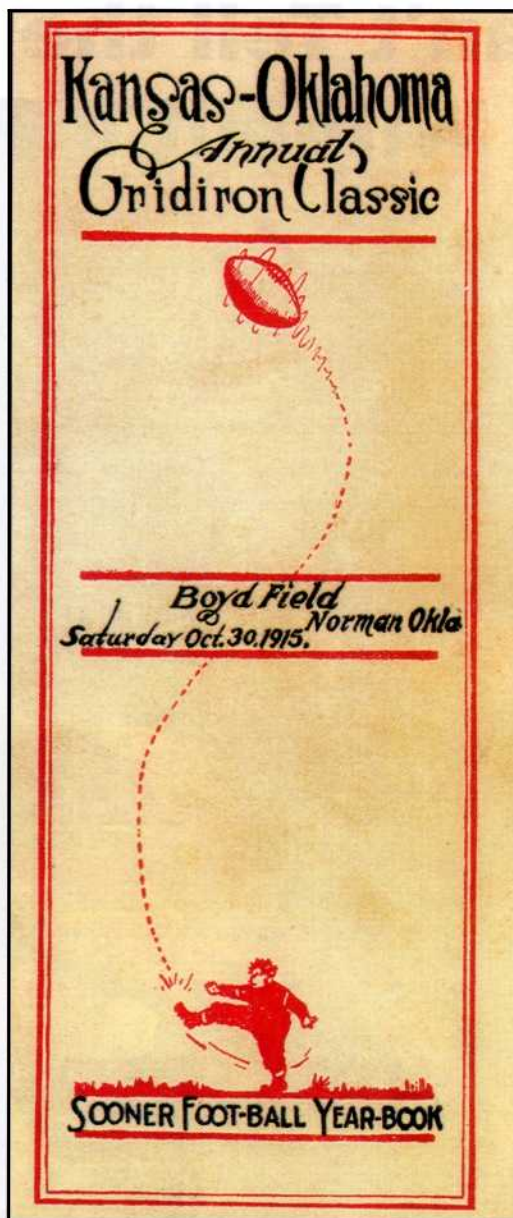
Certain events spark memories for unusual reasons. During the 1922 OU-Missouri game, six persons were injured when part of the Boyd Field bleachers collapsed. "That sped the drive for a new stadium," Lovett says.

Lovett noticed that the early program covers looked hand-drawn, whereas in later years the Athletic Department used illustrations available nationally. Later, the trend shifted back to covers identifiable with OU.

**P**hotographs from the Roy Heffner and OU Photo Service collections depict all aspects of the football program: team photos, coaches, homecoming parades, "Mex," the canine mascot, the 1939 band spelling "Dad" on the field, crowd shots (most men wore coats and ties), and Bud Wilkinson's weekly football newsletter.

"For team photographs from the 1910 and 1920s era, we made contact prints from large glass plates," Lovett says.

A promotional series, "Football at OU," included food menus for the 1948 football team: "Pre-game Breakfast: Big glass of orange juice, Hot or cold



cereal, Filet minon (sic) steak, Scrambled eggs, Buttered toast and honey, Coffee or milk. Pregame Lunch: Big glass of orange juice, Hot tea, Buttered toast and honey, Halved peaches in syrup. After-game Dinner: Country-style fried chicken or 24-ounce steak, bacon-wrapped, Mashed potatoes, Cream gravy, Creamed peas and stewed corn, Vegetable salad, Pie or cake with ice cream, Coffee, tea or milk."

Lovett resisted devoting too much space to Wilkinson. "Bud epitomized class and excellence," he says. "As a tactician, he moved ahead of his time with innovations such as the 5-2 defense and refinements to the Split-T offense. A handsome man, he photographed well, whether on the sideline in

his fedora and tie or in front of a television camera. However, Bud's tenure represented only part of the exhibit. All the coaches receive their due."

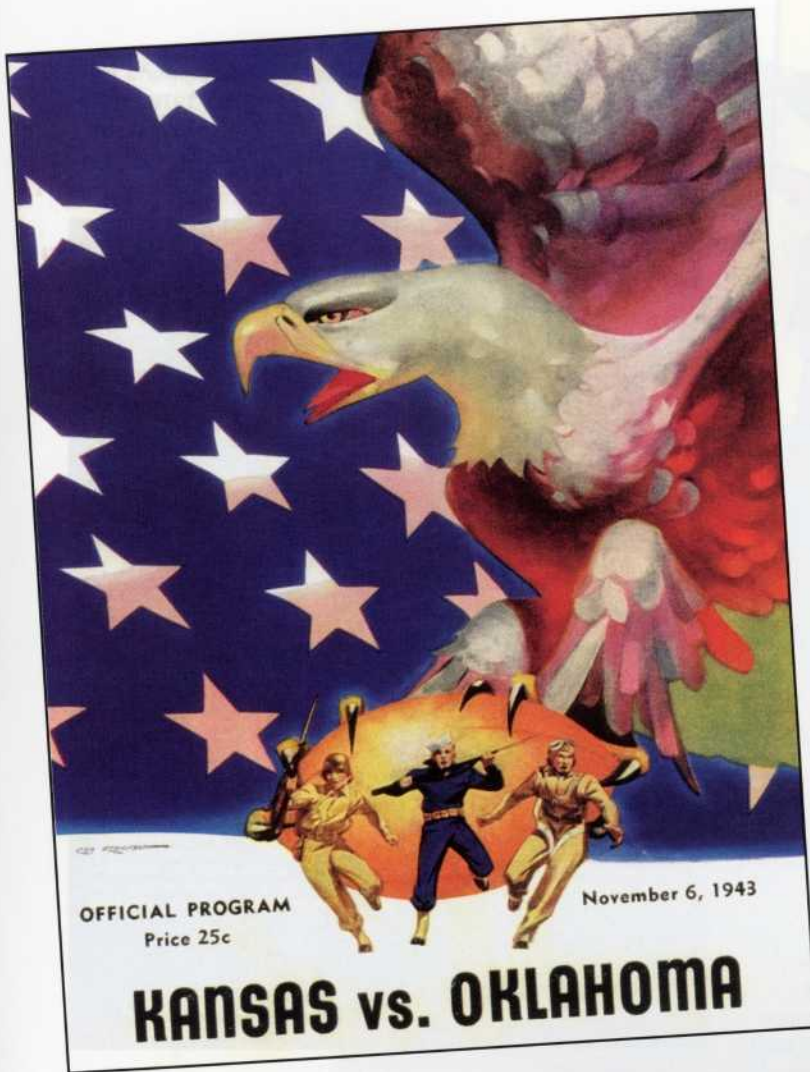
**S**ome OU fans heard about the exhibit and looked forward to reliving memories. Addie Lee Barker worked 18 years as an assistant to directors Harold Keith, his son, Johnny Keith, and Mike Treps in the OU Sports Information Office. Her job tenure spanned the careers of five coaches: Wilkinson, Gomer Jones, Jim Mackenzie, Chuck Fairbanks and Barry Switzer.

"Each coach brought special strengths," she says. "They went about the task in their own way. I respect them. Looking back, I remember certain players, too, people who stood out not only for their talent on the field, but as human beings. Tommy McDonald, an All-American halfback in 1956, took time to pose for a picture with my two sons; they never forgot that. J. D. Roberts, who later went on to coach the New Orleans Saints, always stood out as a special person, too. I felt fortunate to be living in Norman, since I was able to visit the exhibit and to see former players and coaches there."

Amy Monsour, a '94 graduate, works as special events coordinator in the OU Office of Public Affairs.

In her previous position as assistant director of Prospective Student Services, she learned the value of placing historic photos in campus buildings. When her grandfather, Fred Monsour, a '29 graduate, visited her in Jacobson Hall, he noticed them.

"While waiting in the lobby he became mesmerized by the photographs," she says. "He climbed the stairs, looking at every picture, chuckling as they took him back to another time—OU in the late 1920s. After Fred's visit, John Lovett helped me find pictures of my grandfather when he was at OU. I discovered that he had joined both the American Society of Civil Engineers and the Jazz Hounds, a spirit group founded in 1917. In fact, I gave a copy



This bold patriotic cover of late 1943 is, perhaps, indicative of the rising public confidence in the war effort as the United States moved to the offensive in both the Pacific and European theaters. The Sooners also demonstrated a strong offense as they pounded the hapless Jayhawks 26-13.

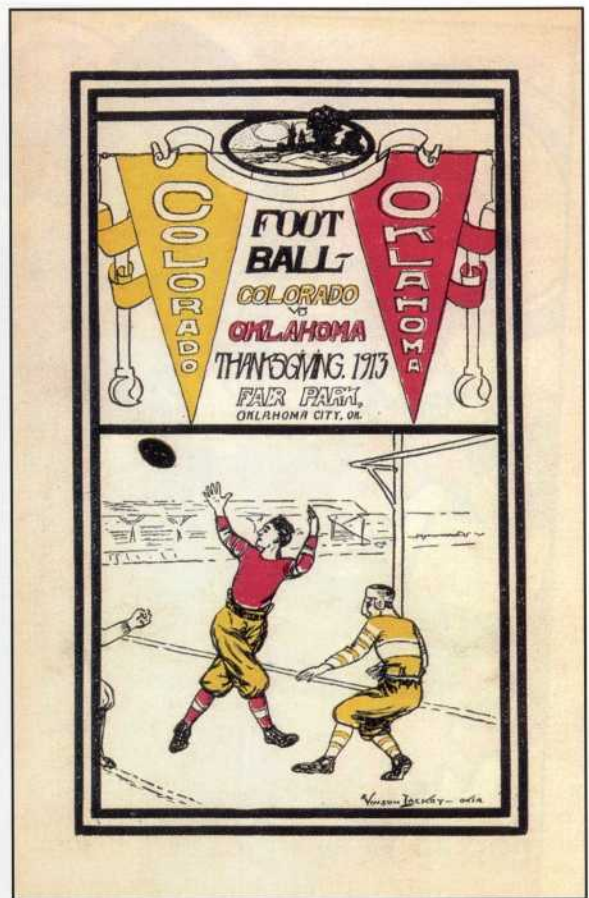
of the Jazz Hound picture to him for Christmas. In one visit to the Western History Collections, I learned about my grandfather and campus life in those days. I was excited that the Jazz Hound picture found a place in the football programs exhibit. This project again pointed out that President David Boren understands the traditions which are the foundation of our University."

As Coach John Blake struggles to rebuild the Sooners, a winning tradition provides a building block. During the years covered in the WHC exhibit,

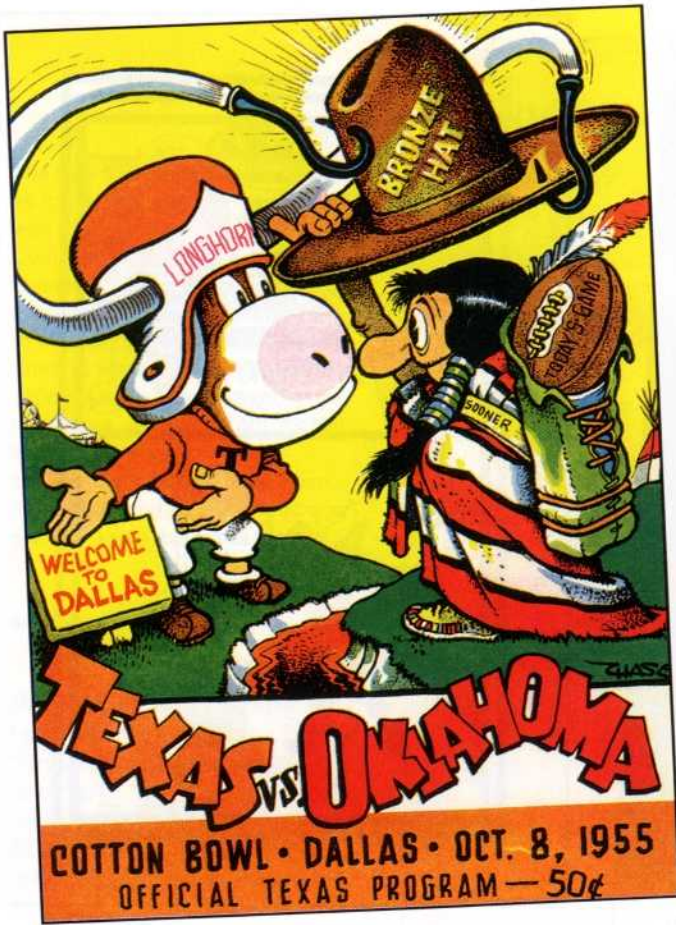
Robert Taylor



One of the most enthusiastic early visitors to the fall exhibit of OU football programs was 94-year-old Harold Keith, center, the man who turned sports information into an art form. Mr. Keith died in Norman on February 24, 1998. At left is Western History Collections librarian and photo archivist John Lovett; WHC curator Donald DeWitt is at right.



In 1913, OU played its football games at Fair Park in Oklahoma City. Colorado, then known as the Mountaineers, was the leading team in the Missouri Valley Conference, and OU was a definite underdog. OU managed a decisive win of 14-3.



Above: The cover designers returned to a cartoon motif featuring a Texas Longhorn and Little Red, OU's mascot, for this 50th anniversary clash between OU and Texas in 1955. The Bronze Hat is the trophy awarded to the winner in this traditional rivalry. The Sooners smashed Texas 20-0, kept the hat, and went on to win the conference title, the Orange Bowl game and the national championship.

Below: This patriotic red, white and blue cover supports the listing of OU's All-American players from 1913 to 1976. There is nothing like a decisive win to boost the enthusiasm for the home team, and this game did just that as OU trounced an error-prone Utah team 62-24.

1913 CLAUDE REEDS \* 1915 FOREST "SPUI" DEYER \* 1920 RUF "SHUFF" SHROTT \* 1926 PHIL PERKINS \* 1927 GRANVILLE NORRIS \* 1934 CASH GENTRY \* 1935 J. W. "DUB" WHEELER \* 1937 PETE SMITH \* 1938 WALTER "WADDY" YOUNG \* 1939 DILFORD "CACTUS FACE" DUGGAN \* 1939 FRANK "POD" IVY \* 1946 JOE GOLDING \* 1946 JOHN RAPACZ \* 1946 PLATO ANDROS \* 1946 BUDDY BURRIS \* 1947 BUDDY BURRIS \* 1948 JACK MITCHELL \* 1948 BUDDY BURRIS \* 1949 GEORGE THOMAS \* 1949 JIMMY OWENS \* 1949 DARRYL ROYAL \* 1949 STANLEY WEST \* 1949 WADE WALKER \* 1950 FRANKIE ANDERSON \* 1950 BUDDY JONES \* 1950 JIM WEATHERALL \* 1950 LEON HEATH \* 1951 TOM CATLIN \* 1951 JIM WEATHERALL \* 1952 BUCK McPHAIL \* 1952 BILLY VESSELS \* 1952 EDDIE CROWDER \* 1952 TOM CATLIN \* 1953 J. D. ROBERTS \* 1954 MAX BOYOSTON \* 1954 KURT BURRIS \* 1955 TOMMY McDONALD \* 1956 JERRY TUBBS \* 1956 BO BOLINGER \* 1956 ED GRAY \* 1956 TOMMY McDONALD \* 1956 BILL KRISHER \* 1957 BILL KRISHER \* 1957 CLEON THOMAS \* 1958 BOB HARRISON \* 1958 JERRY THOMPSON \* 1962 JOE DON LOONEY \* 1962 LEON CROSS \* 1962 WAYNE LEE \* 1963 RALPH NEELY \* 1963 JIM GRISHAM \* 1963 RALPH NEELY \* 1964 RALPH McADAMS \* 1964 CARL McADAMS \* 1965 CARL McADAMS \* 1966 GRANVILLE McADAMS \* 1967 BOB McADAMS \* 1967 LIGGINS \* 1968 LIGGINS \* 1968 STEVE OWENS \* 1969 STEVE OWENS \* 1969 KEN OWENS \* 1971 GREG OWENS \* 1971 JACK OWENS \* 1971 TOM OWENS \* 1972 GREG OWENS \* 1972 DERLAND OWENS \* 1972 TOM OWENS \* 1972 ROD OWENS \* 1973 ROD OWENS \* 1973 SELMON \* 1973 FOSTER \* 1974 SELMON \* 1974 SELMON \* 1974 KYLE OWENS \* 1974 TINKER OWENS \* 1974 RANDY HUGHES \* 1974 JOE WASHINGTON \* 1975 TERRY WEBB \* 1975 LEROY SELMON \* 1975 MIKE VAUGHAN \* 1975 JOE WASHINGTON \* 1975 BILLY BROOKS \* 1975 TINKER OWENS \* 1975 JIMBO ELRDO \* 1975 DEWEY SELMON \* 1976 MIKE VAUGHAN \* 1976 ZAC HENDERSON

A SALUTE TO THE SOONER ALL AMERICANS SINCE 1913



Elvis Peacock scampers for 20 yards against the struggling Utah defenders in 1977.

the Sooners won five national championships and crowned three Heisman Trophy winners—Billy Vessels, former OU Athletic Director Steve Owens and Billy Sims. All the past glories were represented there, preserved by Harold Keith and the other sports publicists who put the Sooners on the map.

WHC Curator Donald L. DeWitt was delighted with the many visitors who viewed the exhibit before it closed in late December—and especially pleased that the material has found a permanent home. Purchased by the OU Athletic Department, the exhibit will be part of Sooner sport archives in the new Barry Switzer Center.

“We searched for a theme to catch the public’s attention,” he says. “Shirley Clark, our staff assistant, noted the renewed interest in OU football tradition and suggested this exhibit theme. We know our visitors enjoyed the result.”