

Pajama Parade, 55-Yard Pass Highlighted First Homecoming

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The school that got its start on 40 acres and \$10,000 celebrated its 33rd homecoming November 1.

But, so far as anyone knows—and those who remember hope—there never again will be a “back to nature” movement such as marked the original University of Oklahoma homecoming on October 30, 1915.

Instead, Sooner alumni returned to the University campus for a more conventional affair—dinners, receptions, class meetings and informal parties.

But for the moment let's go back to 1915—the year officially recognized as the first O. U. homecoming. (The *University Oklahoman*, then the student paper, once designated the Sooner-Missouri game of 1914 as the first homecoming.)

President Stratton D. Brooks approved the 1915 plan submitted by several University faculty members. Invitations were mailed to former University students and more than 1,700 Sooners—1,200 of them students—were on hand to carry out the first official homecoming.

Published reports of the activities describe a pep demonstration on the Friday night before the Oklahoma-Kansas game the following afternoon.

“The pep demonstration held the night before the game was a striking event, one that brought stares from the eyes of even Norman residents, hardened though they were to years of ‘shirt tail’ parades,” reads one account of the events.

“It was known as the ‘peripatetic pajama parade’ and the student newspaper reports that University seniors and sophomores wore the flowing robes of Grecian dancers; juniors appeared in flannel pajamas and the Ruf Neks, who, if memory serves me correctly, were first organized in 1915, wore gaudy silk pajamas,” wrote a reporter. “The ‘frosh’ started a ‘back to nature’ movement but compromised on ‘beeveedes.’”

E. D. Meacham, then line coach at the University and now dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, recalls that “There weren't 16 pairs of pajamas among the entire student body in 1915.” That's how the back to nature movement began.

Next morning the autumn sun shone brightly. Throughout the morning hundreds of students and grads visited Dr. Brooks in the president's office.

That afternoon, before the largest crowd that ever had seen a game on Boyd Field (just how many no one knows) Bennie Owen's Sooners won their sixth straight contest of the season, 23-14, from Kansas.

The first quarter of the game ended in a scoreless tie, but early in the second period Kansas scored a touchdown and kicked the extra point. A few minutes later, however, Spot Geyer, captain of the Sooners, threw a 55-yard pass to a substitute end, Howard McCasland. McCasland was downed within a few yards of the goal, but McCain, a half-back, scored the first Sooner touchdown and the teams were tied, 7-7, at halftime.

That 55-yard pass—which Hugh McDermott, now professor of physical education for men, remembers well—since he was a freshman then—still is on record as being one of the longest ever completed by a Sooner eleven.

In the third period Oklahoma completed more passes and scored a second touchdown. Shortly thereafter, according to an account of the game, “Hap” Johnson returned a punt 65 yards for another Oklahoma score. Captain Geyer then booted a 42-yard field goal, and in the final period Oklahoma fought off a determined Kansas rally.

The Sooners went on to play an undefeated season—10 games in all. An 11th contest was rained out. It was Owen's second all-victorious team—one that defeated Texas, 14-13, in a bitterly fought duel at Dallas.

So elated were alumni who originated the homecoming idea—and other football enthusiasts—that

after the Kansas game a giant barbecue was held on Boyd Field. A Texas steer furnished the “piece de resistance,” reads an account of the celebration.

“A good time was had by all,” the story goes on, as Edward Everett Dale (professor of history) and Roy Hadsell (former faculty member now deceased) recited impromptu verses and Dr. Brooks and Guy Y. Williams (professor of chemistry) made speeches.

A coincidence with the homecoming of 1915 was that the coach at the University of Kansas was Adrian Lindsey, who later joined the Sooner staff.

Homecoming talk was first heard on the University campus in 1912 and, as mentioned previously, some consider the 1914 Missouri game as the initial observance. It was early in 1915, however, that alumni and faculty members participated in preliminary discussions of official homecoming plans.

Among those making arrangements were Errett Newby, then secretary and registrar and now an Oklahoma City oil executive; Dr. Williams, Dr. Hadsell, and Mr. Owen of the faculty; Tom Carey, 1908 graduate, former Alumni Association president and now an Oklahoma City businessman, and Fred E. Tarman, '10, president of the Association in 1915 and editor of *The Transcript*.

Mr. Newby is considered the “daddy” of the idea. It was he who felt it proper to stimulate interest among former students by bringing them back to the Sooner campus at least once a year. Prior to 1915 the principal effort was made at commencement exercises in the spring.

Although some alumni returned for each football game, Mr. Newby believed a concentrated pilgrimage would prove valuable both to the alumni and the University. The efforts of that small group resulted in a movement which attracted thousands to the campus this November 1.

If you have been led to believe that 1915 marks the beginning of so-called Sooner spirit, do not be misdirected. It really began on the 15th day of September, 1892, when first University classes were held in the building now occupied by the Landsaw Furniture Company, only recently remodeled.

Dr. David Ross Boyd, first president, had three colleagues as faculty members, F. S. E. Amos, W. N. Rice, and Dr. Edwin C. DeBarr. Dr. DeBarr is the only one of the quartet now living. Dr. Boyd, while administering University affairs, also undertook to make Norman a city of trees—a project which obviously was highly successful.

When he arrived in Norman in August, 1892, from Arkansas City, not a tree or a shrub grew in the city of 1,500 inhabitants.

Three years later, in the autumn of 1895, the first Sooner athletic activity—which has become so closely associated with homecoming—took place. John A. Harts, who died recently in California, joined the faculty that autumn. He came from Southwest Kansas College at Winfield where he had played football.

Harts was the only “Sooner” who had ever seen a football game, and the day before the first scheduled game with Oklahoma City he suffered a charleyhorse. The Sooners were beaten, 34-0.

The first Sooner team's “training room” was on the third floor of a hotel on West Main street where 10 of the 12 O. U. students lived.

C. Ross Hume, who played with the Sooners in the '90s and who now lives in Anadarko, has described the composing of the official University yell.

He recalled that a number of students who formerly attended Southwest College at Winfield and were members of Sigma Nu fraternity suggested one of that organization's yells be altered to become the Sooner yell.

Before the one-game season in 1895 the fraternity yell, last line of which was “What's the matter with Sigma Nu?” was altered to become:

“Hi rickety whoop-te-do, Terra a-hoo, hulla baloo, Uni, Uni, Uni, U.”

Three years later at a meeting of the Modocs, O. U. glee club, several members rehearsed a revised version of the yell. The next day, at a chapel exercise, the group submitted the yell for acceptance—or rejection. It went:

“Hi rickety, whoop te-do, Boomer Sooner, Okla. U.”

The chapel accepted it by acclamation.

There are many Sooners, no doubt, who are misinformed on the true colors of their alma mater. Often referred to as the “Red and White” O. U. colors technically are “Crimson and Cream.”

In the autumn of 1895, at a University faculty meeting, President Boyd appointed Miss May Overstreet, instructor in English, to recommend school colors.

“Since Miss Overstreet is the only lady on the faculty we will ask her to act as chairman to select colors and present them at the next meeting,” President Boyd said.

Letters were written, samples collected, various combinations observed and a bundle of material was displayed at the appointed time. The faculty agreed with Miss Overstreet's choice, cream and crimson.

Fifty years ago this autumn another Kansan, V. L. Parrington, joined the University faculty. He had been associated with Emporia College. Parrington volunteered to act as coach in both football and baseball. In football—its third year at O. U.—the Sooners defeated Oklahoma City High School, 16-0.

The victory was so satisfying and opponents so hard to find the University team challenged Oklahoma City twice more that autumn.

From the simple, first meeting of the University Board of Regents, who authorized Dr. Boyd to purchase “two brooms, one hair broom, one box of soap, one mop, two water buckets and one feather duster,” the University has grown in parallel action to the state from territorial days to statehood, through the first great conflict and into post-World War II era, and from the shocking, pajama parade homecoming of 1915 to the streamlined alumni events early in the 55th year of the University.

Film Actress Chooses O.U.

Nancy Gates, a special student from Denton, Texas, came straight from Hollywood to the University to study English, history, radio production and radio continuity writing.

In the entertainment field since she had her own radio show over WFAA, Dallas, at the age of 13, this 21-year-old Hollywood star has lived a life packed with accomplishments. While singing on her radio show she did modeling on the side, but at 15 a Hollywood scout convinced her and her mother that RKO pictures was the place for Nancy to finish her last two years of high school.

One of her early roles was that of Margie in the series of Gildersleeve pictures. She also played the second lead in “This Land is Mine,” with Maureen O'Hara and Charles Laughton; the second lead in “Spanish Main,” with Maureen O'Hara and Paul Henreid; the lead in “Master Race,” and the lead in “Nevada,” opposite Robert Mitchum. While playing in Hollywood pictures she also did radio shows.

She explains her enrolling at the University as a matter of expediency and a chance to again be near home. Once she tried attending U.C.L.A., but whenever a studio or radio program would start casting, she couldn't help cutting classes.

Although Nancy plans to go back to the theater when she finishes study here, she much prefers radio work. For the meantime, though, Nancy plans to get a good liberal education and continue her radio show on WKY at 10 p. m. each Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

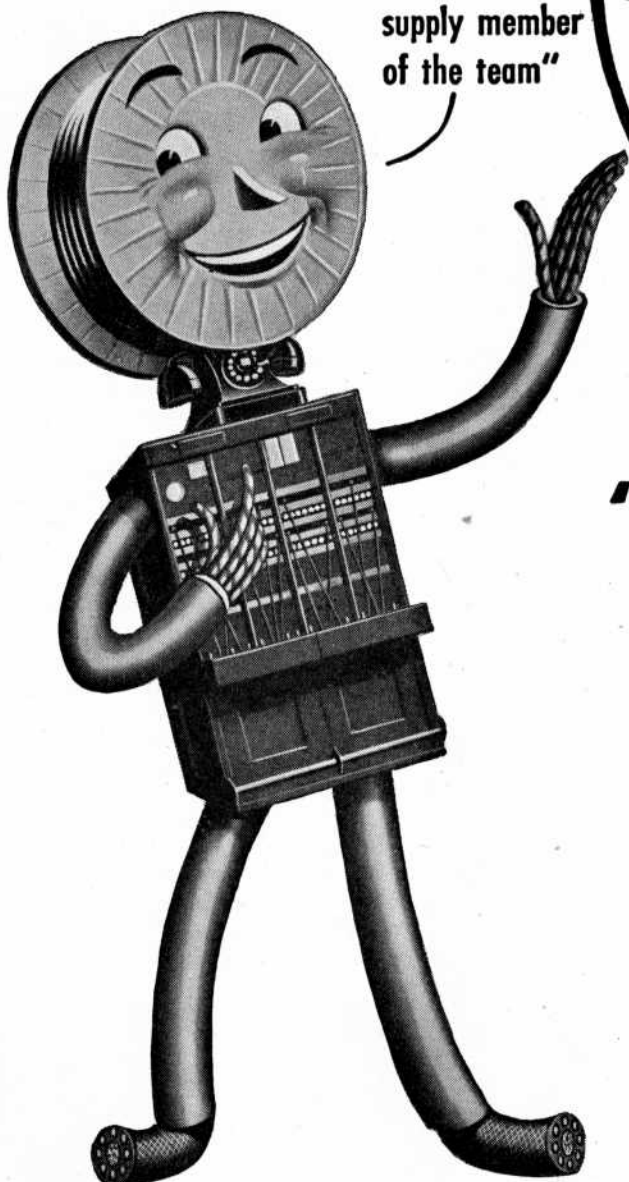
O.U. Fans Take to Air

Your modern sports fan isn't letting distance come between him and his favorite football team. Quite often he's flying to the game.

More than 60 planes were serviced recently on Saturday at Max Westheimer Field, University of Oklahoma airport. All carried football fans, many of them out-of-state followers, Joe Coulter, '40ba, airport manager, said. He isn't worried about a space shortage for visiting airmen, because the O. U. airport is one of the largest university airports in the nation.



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Sooner Magazine and a big gang of Sooners go to a party!

Here are a number of pictures taken of visiting alumni who attended the annual Homecoming gabfest in the Oklahoma Memorial Union Building immediately following O. U.'s victory over Iowa State, 27-9.

Pictures 1 and 2 show graduate groups sipping hot coffee and munching doughnuts. Easily identified are Paul Darrough, '13ba, '15law, Oklahoma City; Frank S. Cleckler, '21ba, Oklahoma City; Hugh McDermott, '20ba, Oklahoma City; Lloyd Swearingen, '20bs, '21ms, of the O. U. staff; Tom B. Matthews, '06ba, Tulsa; John Hervey, '23ba, '25law, Oklahoma City and Norman and Dean Arnold E. Joyal of the O. U. College of Education.

3. Celeste Frost Rippetto, '26ba, Oklahoma City visits with E. A. Shiner, '26bs, '28ms (standing) the recently elected president of the O. U. Alumni Club of Topeka, Kansas, and her brother, Jack Frost, '26ba, Oberlin, Ohio.

4. These Sooner grads are swapping yarns about "back when." Reading from left to right: Harrington Wimberly, '24ba, federal power commissioner, Washington, D. C., and Altus, Oklahoma.





Tom B. Matthews, '06ba, Tulsa, past president of the University of Oklahoma Alumni Association; Mrs. Ruby Phillips, Seminole; Paul Clapper, '22-'23, of Muskogee and Waynoka; C. Guy Brown, '23ba, Oklahoma City, and Milt Phillips, '22, Seminole. Brown and Phillips are members of the Executive Board of the Association.

5. Congressman Mike Monroney, '24ba, Washington, D. C., past president of the Alumni Association, speaks to an interested group about his recent tour of Europe. Listening to him are (seated, left to right) Lt. Col. Gail Murphy, '32-'36, who only 48 hours before arrived home from Italy; Elmer Ash, Norman rancher, and Foy Rice, '40, Norman.

6. The old timer, Dean Arthur B. Adams (left), visits with Mrs. John Harley, '24h.ec, and John Harley, '13ba, '15law, of Tulsa. John is a past Association president, having served in 1914-15.

7. The coffee is good, the doughnuts excellent, but the chatter is best. Here, from left to right, are Earl Bartholomew, '21ba, '22eng, '23eng, Birmingham, Michigan; Mrs. Earl Bartholomew, '21bm (coffee in hand); Dave McKown, '21geol, past Association president, and Mrs. Florence Monnett McKown, '22ba, Oklahoma City.

