

One Man, One Team, Pride

MUCH HAS HAPPENED TO OKLAHOMANS' PRIDE SINCE THE THIRTIES. SOME PROMINENT O.U. ALUMNI HAVE DEFINITE IDEAS AS TO WHY.

"Them Okies? They're all hard-looking! . . . Well, you and me got sense . . . Okies got no sense and no feeling. They ain't human. A human being wouldn't live like they do. A human being couldn't stand it to be so dirty and miserable. They ain't a hell of a lot better than gorillas."—from *The Grapes of Wrath*.

PERHAPS John Steinbeck had no intention of saddling the residents of one state with an inferiority complex and a slurring nickname when he wrote about the migrant workers who fled America's depression-wracked Dust Bowl in the mid-Thirties. Intend or not, Okie stuck. Okie became as insulting as a great many other four-letter words.

But times change. Today Oklahomans forget to cringe at the sound of Okie. Indeed—by some Oklahomans—the word Okie is used as the stark slogan for a re-surg-ing sense of self-confidence. Today Oklahomans are proud of their state.

What has brought about this switch? There are many reasons for the new attitude. But one of the most apparent reasons is a football team and its coach.

A number of distinguished Oklahomans were asked to evaluate the effect O.U. football has had upon the people of Oklahoma. Here are their comments:

JENKIN LLOYD JONES, Editor, *The Tulsa Tribune*:

"A great football team can't make a great state, any more than it can make a great university.

"But it can remind some people of truths they may have overlooked. One truth that has been generally overlooked among Oklahomans is that this IS a great state. We are great bickerers among ourselves and apologizers to strangers. It is wise to be conscious of one's shortcomings, but Oklahoma has overdone it. We have too often had the gnawing fear that maybe we ARE Okies, after all.

"The Wilkinson teams helped dispel this delusion. An invincible backfield and an impenetrable line can be appreciated by even the dumbest citizen, and we all threw out our chests a little.

"Secondly, the favorable publicity about the Wilkinson teams was second only to the delightful musical 'Oklahoma!' in peddling to the world the impression that Oklahoma must be quite a place. The image of shiftless sharecroppers riding around in jalopies covered with mattresses didn't tie in well with 11 smart lads running circles around the nation's great teams under the guidance of one of the most articulate and obviously one of the most gentlemanly football coaches in the business.

"The BIG RED has done a fine job for us all."

MIKE MONRONEY, '24ba, United States Senator:

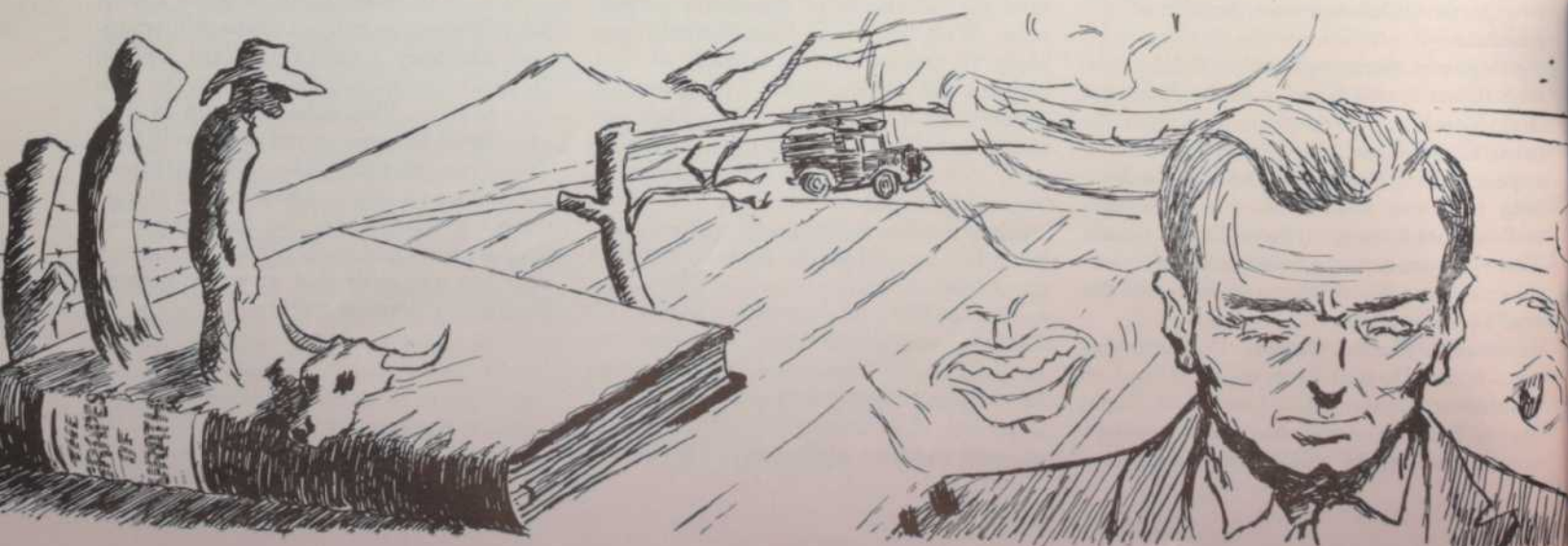
"For some 30 years Oklahoma talked about means of properly publicizing our state. The exploits of the "Pretty Boy" Floyds, the impeachment of governors by pajama sessions of the Legislature, the dust bowl migrations—all cried out for counter-acting publicity.

"We lacked the money and the news peg for the big publicity push to place our merits—instead of our demerits—before the world.

"Then came our two great breaks—the Rogers and Hammerstein musical show and movie 'Oklahoma' and the 'Big Red' football team. Both served to rescue us from the glaring headlines of crime, poverty, and instability.

"Throughout each year, the millions who read the sports pages (and more read these than the straight news stories) follow Oklahoma as the supreme leader of America's Number 1 sport. Eighty-four million TV viewers marvel at the speed, the versatile play and the sportsmanship of the Big Red in the network telecasts of our games.

"Oklahoma has become a favorite with the world's fans not only because of its



"Business men, industrialists, leaders in the economic fields of our nation and those in other professions or occupations who influence investment and determine business and industry policies, are favorably impressed with the name 'Oklahoma' through knowledge and contact with our splendid O.U. football team."—Milt Phillips, Oklahoma publisher.

many victories, but because of the clean, intelligent type of young men who play, and the heads-up, rapid-fire style given them by Coaches Bud Wilkinson and Gomer Jones. A state that can produce this kind of team MUST be good!

"For sportsmanship in victory or defeat, the 'Big Red' tops all the hundreds of college teams. They not only win like the champions they are, but in the Notre Dame game they proved they could lose like champions too.

"The great reputation won on the playing fields at Norman has given Oklahoma a new international reputation, unmatched by any other of our 48 states."

ROBERT S. KERR, '16, United States Senator:

"The development of football at Oklahoma under Coach Bud Wilkinson and his associates has made a contribution to the University and the State of tremendous proportions.

"Oklahoma is more highly respected in the nation, and, for that matter, in the English speaking world because of the great and sustained success of Oklahoma's Big Red under Wilkinson.

"To my mind the most important contribution he has made has been to the youth of Oklahoma, not only to the young men on his team, but also to the young men

throughout the State. He has put the emphasis on character, self-reliance, teamwork and discipline. It has resulted in those who come under his influence wanting to improve themselves, not only physically, but also mentally and morally.

"As an Oklahoman and one interested in the growth and development of our people, I am and shall always be tremendously grateful to Bud Wilkinson for his effective leadership."

D. A. MCGEE, President, Kerr-McGee Oil Industries, Inc.:

"Almost from the time Bud took over, victorious O.U. teams have served as a symbol of state pride. Most persons, if asked the official colors of the State of Oklahoma, would probably answer, in all sincerity, 'red and white.' It is difficult to tell at which point the Sooners cease to be a part of Oklahoma as a whole and become an athletic team of one of her colleges, or if there even is such a point.

"Just the fact that the Sooner team has won consistently would have provided a rallying point for state pride, but other teams and other schools have won for the State of Oklahoma before. The personality of Bud Wilkinson has been the basic ingredient in building pride in the Big Red team, with its consequent effect on state pride.

"The quiet and authoritative personality of Bud Wilkinson has had its impact on Oklahoma in many ways. His alumni are among us, especially in the oil industry. He has taught Oklahomans a great deal about how to handle success, and how to take defeat.

"He prepares his players in a straightforward manner to do their best to win. In victory, he praises the attempts of the opponent: in defeat he comments only that the other team played better. Then he turns to the task of winning the next game.

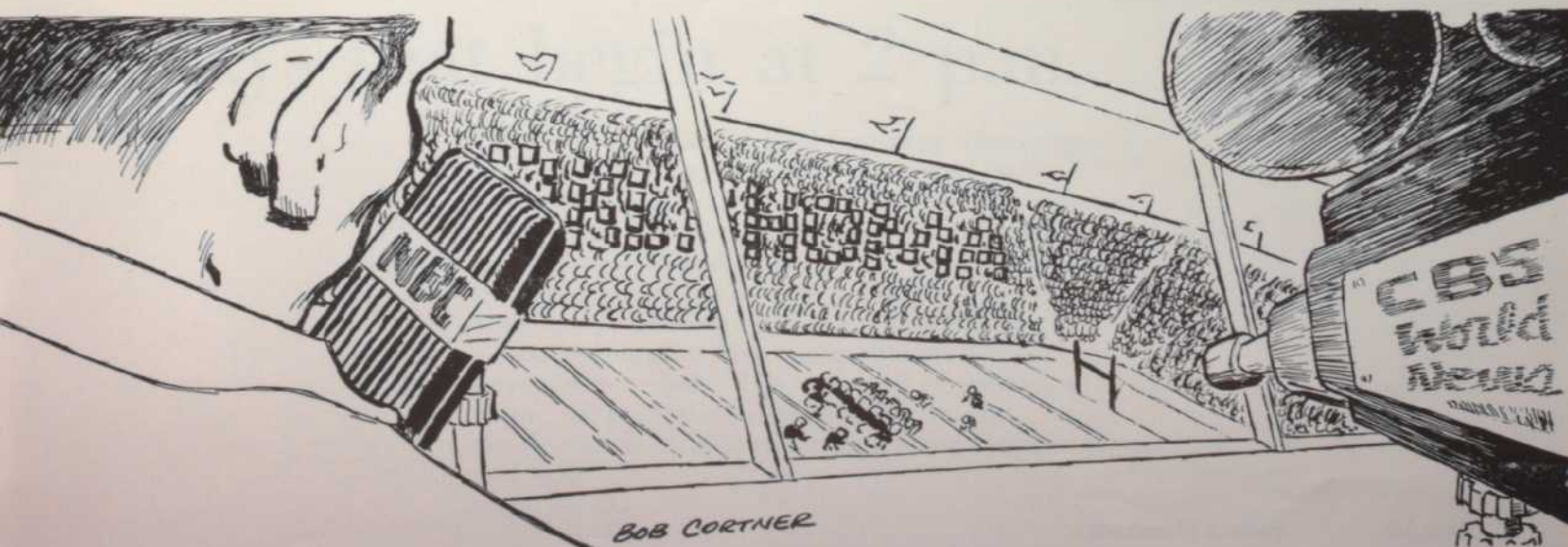
"Oklahoma, as a young state which is hustling to grow, has found a valuable lesson in Bud Wilkinson and his football team."

H. MILT PHILLIPS, '22, Editor and Publisher, *The Seminole Producer*:

"The University of Oklahoma's 'Big Red' football team has indeed made a fine contribution to Oklahoma in many, many ways; not the least of which is a surge of state pride among our own citizens.

"The ability to win football games has, of course, brought attention to Oklahoma

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PRIDE

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throughout all of the United States. The schedules of the teams have been of advantage because they have included games from Boston to the West Coast, and from Indiana to Florida.

"This Oklahoma football record has been noted, favorably, in every section of the country by people in almost all walks of life—because football, especially college football, has attracted the interest of people in every stratum of business and social life. Thus Oklahoma has benefited because our state's name has become known to untold thousands who heretofore would have been unable to pinpoint the geographic location of Oklahoma without searching over a map.

"But the winning of football games is not the only benefit Oklahoma's fine football teams have brought to our great state. The conduct and attitude of Oklahoma players and coaches has made a deep impression on millions of football fans.

"The team-work of the players: the humility blended with confidence—all leave a favorable impression, even on those who are extremely partisan during football contests.

"Business men, industrialists, leaders in the economic fields of our nation and those in other professions or occupations who influence investment and determine business and industry policies, are favorably impressed with the name "Oklahoma" through knowledge and contact with our splendid O.U. football teams.

"Yes, University of Oklahoma football teams have made a fine contribution to our state over the past ten year period. They represent success. They represent fine individual qualities of Oklahomans. They represent teamwork. What finer qualities could anyone seeking a new home, or, considering business expansion, desire from the citizens of a prospective state? People make up a state—and Oklahoma's 'Big Red' has shown the nation the finest group of citizens they could find in any state in the Union.

"These contributions, although perhaps intangible, are of far greater importance than most Oklahomans realize."

DAN PROCTER, '36m.ed, '43ed, former President of Oklahoma College for Women (now vice-president for Star Engraving Company, Houston, Texas):

"As Paul once said, 'I'm Saul of Tarsus, a citizen of no mean city.' In reference thereto, Abraham Lincoln said, 'Yes, it is good to be proud of your home town, but it is better to so live that your home town will be proud of you.'

"Bud Wilkinson has 'so lived' that Oklahomans are proud of him and his 'works.' Everyone loves a winner, IF he abides by all the rules of fair play, and Bud Wilkinson does just that! As Darrell Royal, head coach of Texas University, said, 'Bud Wilkinson has the respect and admiration of his players, because of his insistence upon every player adhering to a code of ethics which will build high morale for any team.'

"Having known Bud Wilkinson personally for the past ten years, having worked with him in Boy Scout finance drives and other youth projects, I have learned some of his personal qualities which inspire those who work with him. His quiet, unassuming manner, his cleanliness in speech and living habits, and his magnetic smile are an inspiration to all who associate with him.

"Yes, Bud Wilkinson and his Big Red football teams have won the hearts of Oklahomans—at home and abroad—and especially those who live in Texas, the state which boasts of the 'biggest and mostest' of everything but football!"

FAIR-HAIRED BOYS

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Iowa State at Ames, November 8: Last year won 4, lost 5, tied 1. With a new coach, Clay Stapleton, and an outstanding back, Dwight Nichols, the Cyclones may be an improved ball club. Team lacks depth and experience to be a real challenger.

Missouri at Norman, November 15: Last year won 5, lost 4, tied 1. Team lost 12 lettermen from '57 team and a coach. New coach is highly regarded Dan Devine. Excellent tailback Hank Kuhlmann returns.

Nebraska at Norman, November 22: Won 1 and lost 9 last year. Team lost 14 lettermen and will be inexperienced and lacking in depth. Coach Bill Jennings says: "We hope to improve as the season progresses."

Oklahoma State at Stillwater, November 29: Last year won 6, lost 3, tied 1. With an open date before meeting Sooners, Aggies are expected to field best ball club in many years. Team returns 18 of top 22 lettermen from '57 and nine additional lettermen.

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