

# Homecoming custom, begun in '12, shows steady growth for 28 years

By Don Bower.

On Nov. 16, 1912, 500 alums invaded Lincoln en masse to start the tradition of "homecoming." Twenty-eight years later the alums are still reserving one week end during the football season to return to their alma mater.

The first homecoming was instigated by George W. Kline, alumni secretary in 1912, and, as part of the program, an informal banquet was held after the Kansas-Nebraska football game. The banquet was informal because "the speakers were limited to ten minutes."

Nebraska won its first homecoming game against the Jayhawks, 12-3, after trailing 3-0 until the last 4 minutes of play. The banquet and the football game were the sole constituents of the weekend, for house decorations did not appear until 1923.

Two years after the first "coming home" the Awgwan paid tribute to the event by issuing a special homecoming issue. A new tradition at the '14 homecoming was dancing at the Armory. All students gathered in the Armory for an all-university mixer, at which "every couple was induced to do their best to break conventionalities."

#### Fireworks, band concert.

Fireworks and a band concert were instituted in the '15 all-university homecoming mixer. At the dance in the Armory 2,000 students and alums were present, drinking 200 gallons of cider. Being a week before Hallowe'en, the Armory was decorated with pumpkins and cornstalks.

Excitement reigned supreme in 1916, because the sophomore president, also chairman of the food committee for homecoming, was kidnapped and could not be found. However, new arrangements were made and food was served, per usual, in the Armory. The DAILY stated that "the attempt will again be made to have as many girls as possible come without dates."

Nebraska lost its first homecoming game in 1916, with Kansas State on the high end of a 7-3 score. Prof. E. M. Fling, cheered up the alums by declaring that "Kansas deserved to win at least once every 10 years."

University Players added to the celebration in 1918 by presenting a dramatization of Browning's "Pied Piper of Hamelin." Saturday afternoon Olympics were held between the frosh and sophomores. The Olympics were between-halves entertainment. Nebraska played Missouri, and defeated the Tigers 52-0. Alumni were guests at their respective frats and sororities after the game.

#### Defeat KU.

The Cornhuskers greeted the alumni in 1919 by defeating Kansas U 19-7. In the evening, there was a large program in the Armory, including dancing specialties, songs by the university male and girl quartets. Herbert Yenne "achieved success in a Hawaiian hula-hula dance."

Saturday morning, Oct. 16, 1920, the freshman and sophomores entertained the alums with their annual Olympics. A luncheon was held at Ellen Smith hall from 12-2 in the form of an alumni rally. Disappointment prevailed at the football game, for UN lost to Notre Dame (led by George Gipp) 16-7.

The DAILY NEBRASKAN issued its first special homecoming edition in 1921, describing Nebraska's victory over Kansas, and the between halves demonstration. According to the DAILY of Nov. 12, 1921, a cardboard Jayhawk was carried onto the field, only to be sliced in two by a Cornhusker wielding an axe, put in a coffin and carried off the field to the "Funeral March."

A forerunner to the present-day card section was started in the homecoming celebration of 1922. Each woman attending the football game was given a scarlet handkerchief, and each man a white megaphone. At a signal from the cheerleader, hankies and megaphones were waved to give a scarlet and cream effect.

#### Decorations in 1923.

Perhaps the most colorful tradition of homecoming, decorations on fraternity and sorority houses, was started in 1923. It was on this homecoming, also, that the Memorial Stadium was dedicated.

Sigma Alpha Epsilon was awarded first prize for its decoration, consisting of goal posts in the front yard wrapped in the colors of Kansas and Nebraska. Streamers were stretched from the posts to the balcony of the house. A Kansas and Nebraska football player flanked each side of the porch and a sign with "Howdy, Boy," greeted everyone who went on the porch.

Gamma Phi Beta captured sorority honors in the second year of homecoming decorations. The Gamma Phi's had two large imitations of tubes of Colgate toothpaste (Nebraska was playing Colgate) and a sign, "Squeeze Colgate."

The first prize for fraternities went to Sigma Phi Epsilon, who had a large illuminated N about 12 feet high on the top of their house. Over the porch was a huge heart with "Welcome" inside, with streamers from the center to the edge of the heart and from the top of the house to the porch roof. On each side of the porch was an illuminated N, with "Homecoming" in the center.

#### Sig Eps win again.

In 1925, Sigma Phi Epsilon again won the fraternity contest for

decorations with a large figure of a college student dressed in white duck trousers and a red sweater, with outstretched hands holding illuminated letters, N and K, and a large red illuminated "Welcome" sign.

Alpha Delta Theta received sorority honors. "Help us pluck the Jayhawk feathers" was the theme. A fuzzy Jayhawk was suspended by his middle with that sign. Another sign above it said "Welcome Grads." On either side were large N letters with long streamers extending from top to ground.

In 1926 Sigma Phi Epsilon again won the crown, and Alpha Delta won sorority honors for the second time. Alpha Delta Theta presented a large wildcat covering the entire front of the house.

The word "Welcum" spelled in large letters on blinds in each window across the front of the house and at the door a dizzy Jayhawk below a caption "Too Much Corn," won the cup for Gamma Phi Beta in 1927 homecoming decorations. For the fourth consecutive year Sigma Phi Epsilon was the victor in fraternity groups. They portrayed a cornfield in their front yard, with two tall figures holding a Sigma Phi Epsilon memory book and above that the letters "1927."

Homecoming was marked in 1928 by the card section of 750 students depicting the Cornhusker twisting the Tiger's tail. SAE won the fraternity decoration cup and Kappa Delta the sorority cup.

#### Rowboat crew.

A crew of Kansas football men in a Kansas rowboat attempting to row over the "Bible" wave (Dana X. Bible, coach) won first place for Alpha Theta Chi in 1929 decorations. A Cornhusker player standing on a pedestal resembling the Statue of Liberty and a light house bearing the inscription, "U of N" was also part of the display. Zeta Tau Alpha was the sorority winner. Their display consisted of a Cornhusker clipping a Jayhawk's wings enclosed by Cornstalks and the state line fence. "Glad 2 C.U" was painted in red on a white banner to complete the decoration.

In 1930 Delta Tau Delta was the winning fraternity. It carried out the idea of a Cornhusker shooting footballs at a tiger from a cannon shaped like an ear of corn. Footballs each carried the name of some factor necessary in winning: straight football, good sportsmanship, etc.

Kappa Delta won with its display of a large N with the K D symbol set in it. Below was a large football on the top of which sat a Cornhusker holding a ball. Below the football was a tiger in the act of springing at the Cornhusker. At one side were several small footballs each bearing the score of a former Missouri game.

#### Cornhuskers outweigh Jayhawks.

In 1931, Sigma Alpha Epsilon won fraternity honors. A Cornhusker balancing in a scale with the Jayhawk on the other side. The Cornhusker was outweighing his opponent. Across the top was "Howdy Grads and Kansas Too" and at the base, "SAE welcomes you." Delta Gamma, winning sorority, pictured a gun spraying Nebraska players over a Jayhawk with a sign saying, "Quick Dana, the Flit."

Not until 1934 did the decorations reappear. The depression was the reason. In '34 there was no judging, but a DAILY commentary stated that the Sigma Chi "Cornhusker cemetery" was the best. It had a specter of death in appropriate garb shown at home among the tombstones marking Cornhusker opponents killed in action with the Scarlet-jerseyed warriors. In the foreground stood a coffin and a newly-prepared grave, while to one side of the other burial plots was a wreath-bedecked slab for the Minnesota and Pittsburgh game bearing the inscription, "Death Takes a Holiday."

SAE won the decorations honor in 1935. A huge spider web with Nebraska taking the form of a spider and the Jayhawker becoming completely enmeshed was symbolized.

#### SAE's win again.

A puzzled tiger gazing angrily at a pig, representing a football, behind the goal posts, was the essence of SAE's winning display of '36. At one side Sam Francis held a rope that was dropped over the goal with a noose ready to ensnare the Missouri beast. The tiger, thru benefit of sound effects, was growling and snarling. A Missouri grid star, rather droopy in appearance, was broadcasting over at the Theta house. But Colonel Bible passing as Major Bowes, thought the Tiger was hitting too many sour notes and gave him the gong. This display won for the Thetas.

In '37, the Alpha Phi's depicted a tall and luscious "Petty" girl in the arms of a Husker football player while a dejected Jayhawk player watched wistfully and said, "I wonder if Biff Jones gives a correspondence course in football."

The Kappa Sig's had a beaverboard replica of Biff Jones aiming a cannon loaded with Huskers at a Jayhawk.

Delta Gamma spelled out "Victory" in glittering ice in 1938. Sigma Nu's had a 7-foot Tarzan swing to and fro, dangling a tiger and emitting fierce yells—until frosh lungs gave out.

Last year, Delta Gamma again won with a spotlighted theater marquee advertising "The Jones Family." SAE's toe-tapping football player waiting outside a maternity ward for the story to bring victory won first in the fraternity division.

## Symphony series starts

Matinee Musical club sponsors three concerts

The Omaha Little Symphony opens a three-concert season Nov. 25, the Matinee Musical Club, sponsor of the programs, announced this week. Organized in response to the demand of Omaha's music lovers for symphonic music, the Little Symphony made its debut last April.

The orchestra, composed of 30 members selected from outstanding musical talent of Omaha, is directed by Richard E. Duncan, who has appeared as violinist and conductor on CBS and NBC networks; has played, conducted and written arrangements for General Motors hour and has filled concert and guest conductor engagements. Percy Grainger, pianist and composer-conductor, will appear with the orchestra Nov. 25, and Virginia Haskins, young and charming coloratura soprano, will appear with it Jan. 27.

The three concerts this winter will be given on Nov. 25, Jan. 27 and March 31 in Joslyn Memorial Auditorium in Omaha. Tickets for the entire season are \$1.50.

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## Ag offers square dancing

For students desiring to practice square dancing, one of the gyms in the ag college activities building will be reserved on Mondays through Thursdays from 12:15 to 1:15 p. m. Tryouts for square dance demonstration groups will be held in about two weeks. Anyone trying out for a place in one of these groups should know the waltz, the two-step and a number of square dance figures.

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