

The Daily Nebraskan The Academic Status of Foot Ball Players

BY DEAN POUND

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Nebraska Songs

By Max Meyer

The question of University songs is one that has been agitated at Nebraska in times past with more or less successful results; many songs have been offered without apparently arousing the proper degree of enthusiasm among the students. It seems to be admitted generally that for a University the size of ours, we are painfully shy on college songs.

The idea is all wrong; there is no reason why Nebraska should not have as many and as good songs as any university, and when conditions are examined it seems strange that we should be behindhand in this respect. We certainly have the singers—nearly every organization at Nebraska provides for singing of some sort at its meetings. The Y. M. C. A., the Y. W. C. A., the literary societies, and the various fraternities all have songs and sing them heartily; the University Chorus, the Men's Glee Club, and the Girls' Glee Club are organized for the express purpose of singing—all these should co-operate in a move toward establishing college songs.

There is nothing more inspiring than a great number of voices singing together; as an enthusiasm arouser nothing can beat it. Yells and cheers are effective and proper in their place, but singing has its place also. Take specific examples. During a lull in the recent Nebraska-Colorado game, the Colorado rooters sang "Glory, Glory, Colorado," with heads bared and hats moving back and forth in unison. It was only a song, but it must have been effective in keeping up the spirits of the Colorado men. Another case: At the Yale-Princeton game this year 800 Princeton rooters remained on the field after the game was over singing their "Hymn to Old Nassau." Could the loyalty they felt toward their team and school have been shown in a better way?

Some steps should be taken at Nebraska to popularize the idea of college singing; after it has been fairly started any number of good songs will be proposed, and once the spirit is fairly aroused it will never die down. Good songs will inspire our athletic teams to greater efforts, will breed and encourage loyalty and devotion to the school in the undergraduate, and will act as another tie to bind the alumni to their alma mater. Can't we have some Nebraska songs?

But a few years since, no one cared, outside of universities, whether a football player had any academic standing. Academic ideals and standards were sneered at as antiquated superstitions, and the business man was held up to us as the type and exemplar of perfection. The most that college men ventured was to contend that higher education did not necessarily disqualify for business and that a graduate might find his college training of some benefit to him in the race for money to which nature had dedicated all men. The spectacle, however, of a confessedly uneducated man, proud of his ignorance, drawing a salary of a million dollars a year, because, as he asserted, he had not been spoiled by education, very nearly put us to silence. In athletic matters, the attempts of boards and directors to apply academic standards rather than the purely business standards of professional baseball were derided and opposed by the general public. Whatever improvement has been made in college athletics, in this part of the country at least, is due to the efforts of professors who insisted in adhering to academic ideals in spite of the outside public.

Recent events have rudely shaken the general faith in business standards. We are not so sure as we were that the business man is the highest specimen of human evolution. We are not so sure as we were that men are to be judged and graded solely by their incomes. We are no longer ashamed of education for its own sake nor do we hold ourselves bound to show a tangible goal in dollars and cents behind every subject of academic study. It is admitted that there is something in academic standards after all. With this revulsion of feeling, has come a no less radical change of view as to college athletics. The very persons who scoffed at faculty regulation and opposed academic control, urging "results" as the goal and holding up professional baseball as our model, now clamor for stricter supervision and abuse athletic boards and directors for not adhering steadfastly to impossible standards. If there had been a "literature of exposure" a few years ago, it would have held up to ridicule the unpractical, out-of-date professor who insisted that football players should study. Today, that same professor is expected to be ubiquitous and Argus-eyed, with the deductive powers of Sherlock Holmes, relentlessly pursuing to the end all departures from the highest academic standards. Despite popular opposition and newspaper ridicule, athletic boards in this part of the United States have done a great work. To ignore this and to scout their motives and denounce their methods, as is now fashionable, can only have bad results.

We have been told recently that "every football player is a grafter." We have been told also that football players are in no just sense students, but that they are a sort of athletic excrement upon the student-body, carefully nursed and tended, but without any academic function. No doubt many well-meaning persons believe that this is so. Only the other day I overheard a well-known citizen upon our own field gravely asserting that there was not a bona fide student in the array before him and that "everyone knew better" than to enquire into the school work they were supposed to be doing. It has seemed worth while, therefore, to look somewhat

closely at the list of our players, past and present, and to see what the public records of the University show as to their scholarship; to see whether it is a list of grafters, or an average student list, made up of men of average student character and average student scholarship. "Literature of exposure" is seldom concerned with the good side of a subject. But the facts, as shown by the records of the Registrar, deserve to be known.

In the Sombrero last spring there is a list of those who were then entitled to wear the "N" for participation in football. This list is headed by the well-known name of John R. Bender. Most people, I suppose, think of him as an athlete pure and simple. But the books show that he graduated A. B. in 1905 with a stainless academic record, and that in his last year, in which he shone so brilliantly upon the field, he pursued eleven courses with credit, receiving one grade of "G" and five grades of "G" and five of "M."

Next upon the list stands M. A. Benedict, a name that bids fair to stand beside Bender's for brilliance of athletic achievement. The books show that when his name was published he was carrying seven subjects, and that he attained a grade of "E" in one and of "G" in four.

No less conspicuous is the next name,—C. T. Borg. The books show that he graduated A. B. in 1904, with an academic record bespattered with grades of "E" and "G" and that as a second-year law student in 1904-1905 he had an average grade above 80 per cent for the whole year.

Following comes the name of C. E. Cotton. The records show that he was then registered for five courses and that in one he received a grade of "G" and in two a grade of "M."

Next in order is F. M. Hunter. Mr. Hunter graduated A. B. in 1905 and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa for conspicuous scholarship. He also gained a place upon the Varsity debating teams. In debate, in the classroom, and on the field, his work was of a very high order.

Glenn Mason stands next upon the list. The books show that for the last semester he obtained two grades of "G" and one of "M."

Next comes E. O. Eager. Mr. Eager was then in the second year of the College of Law and had an average grade exceeding 80 per cent for his entire course.

The next name is H. W. Craig. Mr. Craig was then registered for five subjects, in two of which he obtained a grade of "E" and in two more a grade of "G."

F. A. Barta, who stands next, was then a second-year student in the College of Law. The books show him to be a steady worker with a clean record and an average grade of about 75 per cent.

W. N. Johnson in the semester in which the list was published obtained one grade of "G" and two of "M."

Without going over the remainder of the list in detail, one name deserves especial notice. Everyone who has followed football at Nebraska holds in affectionate remembrance our tower of strength through many hard-fought years, J. D. Ringer. Mr. Ringer graduated A. B. in 1903 and LL. B. in 1905. His college record is admirable, showing a full measure of grades of "E" and "G," and in the College of Law he came within a very few points of election to the scholarship society. His

grades for the last year were above 90 per cent. Mr. Ringer was also chosen upon one of the debating teams and made an enviable record. To all who know him, he is a living refutation of the charge that all football players are grafters. A more conscientious honorable man was never enrolled in the University.

So much for the past. What are the players of 1905 doing? One thing is sure,—they are not delinquent in the work for which they are registered. Let us see, then, what this work is:

Mr. Avery is registered for 12 hours, the first-year course in the College of Law.

Mr. Benedict takes 15 hours as follows,—Horticulture 1, Botany 19, Civil Engineering 5, Applied Mechanics 19.

Mr. Borg carries 13 hours, the required third-year course in the College of Law.

Mr. Burns takes 15 hours as follows,—Mathematics 3, Physics 3, Mechanical Engineering 1, Applied Mathematics 1, Electrical Engineering 3.

Mr. Cotton is registered for 14 hours: Civil Engineering 5, Chemistry A, Spanish 23, Geology 1, and Geology 23.

Mr. Eager carries 15 hours, the third year course in the College of Law.

Mr. Little takes 16 hours as follows,—Mathematics 2, Botany 1, Rhetoric 5, Physics 1, Forestry 7.

Mr. Lundin has the third-year work in the College of Law, 15 hours.

Mr. Mason takes 15 hours, as follows,—Mathematics 1, Physics 1, Civil Engineering 5, Mechanical Engineering 1.

Mr. McDonald takes the third-year work of the course in Forestry, 17 hours.

Mr. Johnson is registered for 17 hours, as follows,—European History 1, French 2, Rhetoric 25, English Literature 11, English Literature 27, Jurisprudence 9.

Mr. Morse carries the third-year work of the General Scientific Course, 15 hours.

Mr. Schmidt has the second-year work of the College of Law, 16 hours.

Mr. Weller is registered for 13 hours as follows,—Mathematics 5, Applied Mechanics 5, Physics 9, Electrical Engineering 19.

Mr. Wenstrand carries 15 hours, namely, Mathematics 3, Applied Mechanics 17, Electrical Engineering 1, Electrical Engineering 3, Astronomy 26.

The facts I have just recited speak for themselves. It may well be doubted if the average student takes courses of more difficulty or maintains a better scholarship. There are undoubtedly individual exceptions. But at the first report of delinquency, they are sent to the rear by the Football Committee. Those who have visions of illiterate pugilists, drafted for beef and athletic skill, maintaining a nominal academic standing for the sake of a substantial athletic standing, will do well to consult the records of the Registrar. Those records will abundantly refute the charge that football players are not students. For ten years now athletic boards at Nebraska have labored zealously to improve the conditions of our teams. They have wasted no words in accusing our neighbors but have done what they could to promote sound conditions at home. The results should be gratifying to all who believe in college sports. Continued earnest and vigorous endeavor in the same direction will eventually put athletics everywhere on a sound academic basis. Nothing will contribute more to that end than the emergence of academic standards in all lines of college life and the downfall of material ideals and so-called business standards now in progress.