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A historical account of the athletic activities of the students of the Illinois Wesleyan University, 1870-1928

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By Fred Muhl

A historical account of the athletic activities of the students of the Illinois Wesleyan University is being compiled by the athletic department and we are offering a portion of this, set up by decades, as our contribution to the history of the institution being prepared for this ninetieth celebration.

It is undoubtedly true that from the beginning some sort of recreational games or contests were indulged in, which might be classified as athletic contests.

No reports or authentic records have been found covering any such events prior to the year 1870.

The athletic department of the university will be very grateful for old athletic pictures or any information that will add to the value of this chronicle.

Carbon copy
1870

1870-1880

It would be difficult for the present day student to visualize the conditions under which the students of Illinois Wesleyan University of this decade attempted to promote their own recreational activities. Without the facilities of a gymnasium, athletic field or the highly developed paraphernalia of the present day they did promote and engage in games and contests which furnished them plenty of fun and activity. The playground were the campus, the commons across the street where the car barns now stand; the skating rink park which was located in the north end of the block now occupied by Kemp Hall and the ball grounds known as the Depot diamond which was located on West Chestnut street near the Chicago and Alton railroad depot.

The games played were baseball, tennis, quoits, and such running games as three-legged races, shuttle or potato races, hopping races, etc.

In 1870 the college boys had a baseball team and they played games with the Shoo Fly Club of Lexington, Ill., the Normal team and one from Eureka. The results of those games were not recorded. They continued to play baseball in the succeeding years of this decade and on June 9, 1874 won the ~~ma~~ amateur championship of the state by defeating the athletic team from Pontiac, 13 to 8. Base Ball continued to be the prevailing sport of this ^{period} ~~epoch~~ and the only names of players of this period we could find are A.H.Liken and H.E.Hoffman.

In 1878, we found the first mention of football in an article which stated that "the boys had purchased a football and now of an evening might be heard the gentle clatter occasioned by a crowd of able-bodied young men madly rushing after a poor inflated ball." It seems that a student by the name of Patterson was the ringleader in this sport and since football as an intercollegiate sport in America began ~~without~~ in 1874, when McGill of Montreal played Harvard, it is easy to classify Illinois Wesleyan with the pioneers of American football.

1880-1890

Nothing was found covering the athletic activities of the early years of this decade, but there is no reason to doubt that baseball and football continued

to be forms of recreation followed by Wesleyan students. * Football began as an intercollegiate sport in 1886. A law student by the name of Chas. S. Craig, formerly a Columbia student started the game. He coached and played. Games were played back and forth with Normal. The results of these could not be found. In 1887 G.W.Randle, who later became a Methodist minister, was elected captain and Craig was still the coach. The scores of the Normal - Wesleyan games of this year were as follows: Wesleyan 4 - Normal 12; Wesleyan 18 - Normal 16; Wesleyan 10 - Normal 10. At the last game the Pantagraph of the following day carried the story and told of the 300 spectators; the Wesleyan colors of navy blue and light gray and how the game ended in a row. It seems the Normal boys did not like a decision Coach Craig, who was referee, had made and refused to continue the game. At a later date in the Pantagraph was a report that the Normal boys admitted that they were wrong and showed their sportsmanship by offering to play the game over, but no record was found that the game was ever played over.

Baseball continued to hold the attention of the Wesleyan students during the latter years of this decade. Many different kinds of teams were played and the college battery during the year 1888 were Wilcox and Boyce. The games with Normal were particularly interesting and so much importance was placed on the third game that both teams loaded up with ringers. The Wesleyan battery was Charley Radburne (of the Boston League team) and Pietsch, a local cigarmaker, who was the catcher. Normal had Clark Griffith as their pitcher and Barton as their catcher. The game ended in a tie 11 to 11.

* This item appeared in the Jan. 17, 1880 Pantagraph: "The Wesleyans are to use the old skating rink lot on N. Main St. for baseball practice." On Oct. 12, 1881: "Wesleyan students are practising for the baseball tournament." On Sept. 1885: "Wesleyan students organized a baseball team." In April, 1888: "The students formed a baseball team."

1890 - 1900

This decade of college athletics has been referred to by many writers as the period of beginning of college athletics.

The year 1890 was a banner year for Wesleyan athletics. The football team had a very successful season. The University of Illinois played its first game of

intercollegiate football against Wesleyan in Bloomington and were defeated 16-0. Normal was beaten three times. Peoria High School was tied 0-0 at Peoria and then the boys lost to the University of Illinois at Urbana in the U. of I. first football victory, 12-0. Harry Ewing was football captain.

It was in this year that the athletes of the different colleges composing the Oratorical League of Illinois prevailed upon the governing board to allow athletic games like football, baseball, track and tennis to be contested at the time and place of the annual intercollegiate oratorical contest which was held this year at Illinois Wesleyan. Hugh S. Magill of Wesleyan won the oratorical contest. University of Illinois won the track meet. Wesleyan won the football championship. U. of Illinois won the baseball tournament. Knox won the tennis singles. Monmouth won the tennis doubles. Kirkpatrick and Bigler were the Wesleyan tennis players. Knowles of Wesleyan won the standing broad jump with weights, 10 feet, $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Harry Kurler was baseball captain. The team had a successful season but lost ~~to~~ to U. of Ill. in the college tournament, 5-4. J.R. Wagner was captain of the 1891 football team which lost every game played but two. The only record of the games played was the one the team lost to the U. of I: 3-1 at the baseball tournament held in conjunction with the oratorical contest.

Henry Kayle was the 1892 football captain. Three of the Funk boys who had played at Yale helped out on several occasions. The team had a very good record this season. The baseball team lost to Illinois College 11-2 at the tournament in Urbana. The college colors adopted for this tournament were purple and steel. The Junior class of this year organized a football team and went out and played a Normal eating club and were defeated 6-0.

There was a let down in the athletic activity during the school year of 1893-94. Irving Banks was football captain and the schedule played was not quite as extensive as the year before. Marvel was the mainstay of the baseball team. The game with Illinois College at the Jacksonville ~~tournament~~ tournament was lost 16-2 but afterward it was awarded to Illinois Wesleyan because Illinois had used some non-student players. Several games were played against the local

Pastime Athletic Club but none resulted in a ~~victory~~ victory for the college boys. Prof. E. Manley was the baseball coach. The faculty baseball team of this year defeated the seniors as a part of the Commencement Week program. The score was 11-5.

The field day program was also quite extensive and brought out quite an array of track athletes. This was the only track and field event on the schedule .

The year 1894-95 saw a revival of athletics at Wesleyan. The football captain was Don McNulton and quite an elaborate schedule was played but the only game won was against the local Pastime team. The baseball team of this year made a very fine record and ^{was} awarded the state baseball championship at the Carlinville tournament. Dick Thompson was the captain. The faculty baseball team defeated the seniors 11-10. Dwight Funk was the track captain who went to the 1895 Carlinville meet. J.P. Bicker won the 50; 3rd -100; 2nd -220 yd. dash. Frank Wilder won tennis singles and teamed with Snyder to win the doubles.

A gymnasium was provided for the use of the Wesleyan students during the year 1894. It was located just east of President Wilder's house on Park St. Here basketball was introduced by D.D. Darrah who was the faculty director of physical education. The college girls played many games. The girls' home games were played in the ING armory at Center and North. The academy boys were defeated by the Ross Club of Normal. The Wesleyan football team of 1895 enjoyed a good season under Capt. Dwight Funk. There must have been ^{quite} ~~quite~~ a turn-out of material as records of a second team and third team game were found. The Normal-Wesleyan schedule for Thanksgiving Day was called off on account of the 8-inch snowfall.

The baseball team played ~~ten~~ games, winning only 4. R. Thompson was the captain. University of Chicago won 23-3 and Univ. of Indiana won 18-8.

Prof. Ferguson organized a baseball team for the Greek students.

Dwight Funk again captained the football team. Two games were played and the faculty stepped in and threatened to expel captain and manager if any more ringers or non-students were played. The team was disbanded. The Wesleyan won the inter-collegiate track meet held in Bloomington in conjunction with the State Oratorical contest. This meet was poorly contested and on account of the lack of interest was abandoned.

Basketball continued to boom through this year and the girls of the college engaged in many contests with the teams of the neighboring colleges and towns. Miss Harper was the captain of the girl's team. The girls' first team was made up of the following: Arnold, Jones, Miller, Shreve, Buck, Robinson, Heaper, and Taylor.

The baseball team under Capt. J.C.Riley started out in great shape but inclement weather slowed the boys out of what might have been a great season. The football team of 1897 under Capt. J.C.Riley won 4 games from different town teams but lost the only college game with Eureka, 18-12.

Dr. Graham of our faculty, who also was a city alderman, had a successful fight in the local city council against an attempt to abolish football in the town of Bloomington.

The girls continued to play intercity basketball, but lost most of the games this season. The following names were recorded as varsity players: ^{Nina Stella} Robinson, Hea - fer, Flora Jones, Lillian Arnold, Bertha Knowles, Leona Miller and Florence Sample. I think this was the last season for girls' basketball as the mothers of the girls stepped in and said "enough is enough".

There is no record of a baseball or a track team being organized this year.

I think the commencement week field day was also abandoned.

The 1898 football team under the captaincy of James O. Dwyer was the first to be trained by a professional coach. Mr. C.D.Enochs who played at the U. of Ill. was hired to coach football and he had a good sized squad to work with. The team won 4 of the 5 games played. The baseball team under captain B.N.Smith won half the games played. The faculty beat the seniors at baseball, 16-9.

The school year 1899- 1900 was a banner ^{one} as far as football and baseball were concerned. The football under captain Amos Johnson was coached by C.P. Clinton of Stanford Univ. (California), won the state championship of the minor colleges. Max White was the baseball captain and the team enjoyed a very successful season. There was no track team or field day on the records.

1900- 1910

It was during this decade that most of the college athletic conferences were organized and it is sometimes referred to as the period of strife between the students and alumni on one side and the faculty on the other to determine who should control the athletic advantages of the college.

In 1900 Mr. James Hogg was hired to coach the football team. Tom Lillard and Edgar Heaper were co-captains. An elaborate schedule was drawn which included Purdue Univ., the Univ. of Illinois and Rush Medical College. Four games were won, four lost and one tied.

The baseball team won six games and lost one to the 3III league team and one of Lombard, 5-4. Fulton was the captain and catcher. But Franklin pitched most of the games.

Wesleyan won two dual track meets. Wesleyan 61 - Eureka 57; Wesleyan 78 - Bradley 20. Granville Calhoun was track captain. Mr. ? Williamson was hired as coach for the 1901 football team. Tom Lillard was captain. A ten game schedule was played . The Univ. of Chicago defeated Wesleyan 22-0 on Marshall Field in Chicago. Lombard College won the Thanksgiving day game, before 1,000 spectators, but the score was 10-2 . The Wesleyan team only won 3 games, Normal Rose Polytechnic and Illinois College were the losing teams. Lincoln College was tied 0-0.

The baseball team under the direction of Capt. Harry Cassidy played a nine game schedule. 5 won, 4 lost. A class Field Day was held during the Commencement Week which was won by the Senior Law Class. No other track results were discovered, though Ralph Bennett did act as track captain.

Mr. William McFadden was elected 1902 football captain but no schedule was played.

The athletic board of control fitted up the top floor of the Music Hall

with a cage and running track so indoor practice in these 2 sports could be had during the winter months. Mr Lyle Straight was captain of the 1903 football team. Five games were played. Wesleyan beat Bradley 11-6 and Normal 9-5. The other games were lost.

The College Faculty beat the Seniors at baseball 16-12.

On March 27, 1903 at Bloomington was held a meeting of college presidents who were attending the Central Illinois Teachers' Convention, for the purpose of forming a College Athletic Conference of the State of Illinois. The meeting elected R.E.Hieronimus of Eureka College as President and Y.M.Swanson of Monmouth College as Secretary. Representatives for the following colleges and universities attended; Knox, Northwestern Univ; Lake Forest, Bradley, Monomouth, Lincoln, Eureka, Blackburn, Ewing, Augustana, Wesleyan, Illinois College and Shurtleff. Twelve regulations were passed to control the inter-collegiate contests. The Conference did not function very long.

The track of 1903 had two meets: IWU 67-Bradley 42; IWU 52- Eureka 52. Hammond was track captain. This statement was taken from the 1903-4 Wesleyan Catalogue: "For two years in succession no football team has been organized, the students having preferred to use their energies in other directions. The change has been attended by better morals and better scholarship."

The baseball team under Captain Clyde Denton played 13 games winning 8. The team lost 2 games in extra innings. Captain Wilson led his track team to victory over Knox 62-42 and over Bradley 61-43. Football was revived in 1904. Richard O'Connell was captain and J.C.Riley coach. The team played five games winning from Bradley 24-0 and from Normal 5-4. The 1905 Baseball team enjoyed a very successful season winning 9 and losing 2, tying 1. Theodore Church was captain.

Wesleyan's football of 1905 played seven games. The Bradley game was won 17-5. Onarga was defeated 5-0. Illinois College and U. of Illinois were tied. The other games were lost. E. McCulloch was captain and Dwight Funk coached the team.

The 1906 baseball team won 4 and lost 5 games. Wesleyan broke even with Knox, Monmouth, and Eureka. Bradley won the only game played that year 9-8. R. Elliott was the captain. Capt. C.H.Wright's Wesleyan track team lost a dual meet to Milliken 83-34 and took 3rd place in the Y.M.C.A. indoor meet.

The athletic board of control hired Fred Muhl, the Bloomington High School football coach to take over the training of the college football squad. Harry Doolittle was captain. Six games were played, three of which were won, two tied and one against Bradley lost 11-0.

Under the direction of Capt. Harold Gardner the baseball team enjoyed a very successful season. 8 games were won and 3 lost. The team beat Eureka 3-2 in 15 innings. C.H.Wright was again track captain but no records of meets were found.

The year 1907 marks the arrival of Tom W. Scott who came to IWU as Director of Athletics and coach of football and track. Capt. Gibbons led the football team to 3 victories and out of the eight games played.

The 1908 baseball team broke even under Harvey Rowland winning 4 and losing 4. The track team captained by O.P.Westervelt made a good showing by winning a dual meet from Bloomington High 80-37 and defeating Milliken 56-48. A newly organized state college meet was held at Bradley in Peoria. Wesleyan finished 2nd.

The 1908 football team under Capt. Paul Thompson won from Lincoln College 76-0 and tied Illinois College 5-5, then lost the other five games. The baseball

team captained by P. Jensen and coached by Frank Wills won 1 game and lost 5.

The track team captained by O.P. Westervelt had a very good season. Wesleyan won the Y.M.C.A. indoor meet and the Y.M.C.A. outdoor meet and the dual meet with Bradley and Milliken. Wesleyan finished 4th in the State meet held in Peoria.

The Wesleyan girls played a series of 5 games against the YWCA team in the new gymnasium of the local YWCA. The YWCA girls won the series. The scores were IWU 25; YWCA -25; IWU 12 -YWCA -9; IWW 10, YWCA -10: the downtown girls won the deciding game, YWCA 8 -IWU -4.

The year 1909-1910 showed more progress in the development of the athletic system of IWU. Floyd Easterbrook was captain and Fred Muhl relieved Tom Scott who was appointed a field agent for the university, as coach of the football team. The team won 4, tied Northwestern Univ and Normal and lost two. A newly organized basket ball team under Captain F.R. Kieley, played a five game schedule in the new YMCA gymnasium. Won 3 and lost 2. The baseball team won 3 college games and lost 2 colleges and 2 games to the 3III league team. Floyd Easterbrook was captain and Frank Wills acted as coach. The track season under Capt. Ben Danforth was very successful. Wesleyan won the dual meet with Normal 93-24, with Bradley 80-36, with Millikin 71-42 and finished in 2nd place in the state meet held in Peoria.

1910-1920

1910 marked the beginning of a new decade in Wesleyan athletics. Fred Muhl took Tom Scott's place as Director of Athletics and coach of all sports. The football team defeated Northwestern Univ. 3-0 on dropkick by Hills. The team went on after this start to win the state championship. Theodore Fieker was captain. The basketball team played 17 games under Capt. Schaffer and won 2nd place in the 1st College Basketball Tournament held in the Bloomington YMCA.

The baseball team won five and lost four. The team lost to Bradley in 11 innings and to Millikin 5-4 in 17 innings. Lester Ewins was captain. Sage Kinnie led a well balanced track team to ~~victory~~ victory in three dual meets and won the inter-collegiate meet in Peoria. The Ill. Intercollegiate Athletic Association was formed by nine colleges at a meeting in Peoria. This later became well known as the "little Nineteen" conference, which is still in operation. The football team of 1911 won 3 and lost 4. Captain was Ralph Yakel. The basketball team of this school year won the state championship at the tournament held in the Bloomington YMCA. Fred H. Young was the captain. The baseball team under Capt. L.E. Ewins broke even in number of games won and lost. Loy McIntosh was the track captain.

The athletic captains for the 1912-1913 season were: football, Ralph Herrerman; basketball, George Hinshaw; baseball, Warner Carlyle; track, Fred Wollrab. The basketball team and the track team both finished 2nd in their respective state meets.

The football captain for 1913-1914 was George Butler; the basketball captain, J. Norman Elliott; baseball, W.C. Dunham; track, Harry Hegl. The basketball team won the state tournament.

The athletic ^{captains} for the year 1914-1915 were: football, W.C. Dunham, basketball, Harlan Hart; baseball, Ivan Elliott and track, Donald Barnhart.

The year 1915-1916 was a banner year for IWU. The football team under Robert Johnson won 6 games and lost 3. Norman Elliott captained the 1916 basketball team which won 15, lost 4 and took 4th place in the state tournament. Capt. Earl Bentley's baseball team won the "little 19" championship. Howard Steed was elected track captain, but he did not return so M.M. Elliott acted in this capacity. Howard Rhea was captain of a successful tennis team. The following served as captains of the athletic teams for 1916-1917; football, Paul McFarland, basketball, Howard Millard; baseball, Ed Pacey; track, Robert Ward.

The basketball team played 17 games under Capt. Schaeffer and won 2nd place in the

Interest in athletics waned considerably during the year 1917-1918 on account of the war, but the following captains served in their respective sports; football, Vernon Whitesall; basketball, Harlow Sutherland; baseball and track, Robert Ward. During the year 1918-1919 IWU had to contest with irregularities caused by the SATC and this also affected the athletic teams. Lloyd Kenney was captain of the SATC team (football) which played three other SATC teams, winning from Bradley and Eureka and losing to ^{the} Millikin. By the time the basket ball season started, the SATC was a thing of the past and the boys settled down. The basketball team under Capt. Russell Strange won the title. "little 19" championship. The baseball team under Herbert Linngit and the track team under Keynon Hyle had some success in their modified schedules.

The last year of the decade saw average teams in all sports except tennis. Our tennis team -Lawrence Rust and Marvin Adams won both singles and doubles of the state meet. The football captain was Clarence Rowher, the basketball team was again led by Russell Strange. William Kilber was the baseball captain and acting captain Meaker led the track team to end the 1920 year.

1920-1930

The first year of the decade 1920-30 was just an ordinary year athletically speaking. Earl Zook captained the football team which won 4 and lost 5. Capt. Swing Pennocks' basketball team won 9 and lost 6. The baseball team under Jerome Van Meter broke even on the season's play. Capt. Meaker⁷

The only tennis to attract attention was Prof. Hartsough who won the faculty singles at the State meet. The second year of this decade, which is called the boom period of college athletics, saw the change in the policy and leadership of Wesleyan athletic programs. The new gymnasium was ready and the new coaches took over. By Wimberly and Walter Ritchie were the foot-

ball coaches and Peters was the new physical director and baseball coach. Under Capt. ^{Larue} ~~Jerome~~ Van Meter the football team won 5, lost 3 and tied 2. Frank Fink's basket ball team won 15, lost 7. Jerome Van Meter led the baseball team again which won 5 and lost 5. The track team under Capt. Louis William won 1 and lost 2 dual meets.

The year 1922-23 saw Capt. Delmar Gottschalk lead the football team to 6 victories and 3 defeats. The basketball team under Glen Haessler won 15 and lost 4. The baseball captained by Leland Dunham and coached by Peters won 10 straights and the "little 19" championship. The 1933 track team won 2 dual meets. Glen Haessler was the captain.

The year 1923-24 saw a change in the football coaches. Mr. E.E. Cartwright of the Univ. of Indiana was brought in as athletic director and coach of football and track. Mr. Peters remained as physical director and assistant in football and coach of baseball. Capt. John Zinser's football team won 7 and lost 2. The basketball team won 16 and lost 4 under Capt. Tom Oliver. Capt. Imig and the baseball team had a very successful season, winning 7 and losing 4 games. The track team under Capt. Hugo Darling won 3 and lost 1 dual meet. The 1924-25 captains were as follows: football, "Ike" Belrose; basketball, Ross Anderson; baseball, Reuben Borsch, who was later a Rhodes Scholar; track, Truman Childer. The tennis team under captain won 5 and lost 1 dual meet. This year marked the first appearance of Walter Roettger as basketball coach.

The year 1925-26 started out in a very auspicious manner but owing to an oversight Wesleyan had to forfeit 4 games so the season's net results were 2 won, 2 lost, 4 forfeited and 1 cancelled. Ralph Arends was appointed football captain in place of Harold Wallace who did not return. Carl Morris was assistant football coach. Ross Anderson again captained the basketball team

and this was Cocah Roettger's first of many championship teams. Clarence Axene was captain of the baseball team which won 4 and lost 7 games. Ralph Arends was captain of the track team. The team won a dual meet from Normal and the Quadrangler meet with Normal, Eureka and Lincoln. Fred Muhl coached the track team. Capt. New led the tennis team to 4 victories, 1 defeat and 1 tie. Robert Willman won 2nd in State golf meet. Coach Murray's Wesleyan swimming team won the C.I.A.C. meet in the Wesleyan pool.

The 1926-27 year saw Clarence Axene as football captain. The team won 5, lost 3 and tied 1. Capt. Eldon Volk's basketball team won the 2nd championship for Coach Walter Roettger. Maurice Harling was captain of the 1927 baseball team which won 6 and lost 5 games. Capt. Ralph Arend's track team coached by Don ^{Karns}~~Karris~~ lost 2 dual meets and finished 3rd in a quadrangular meet with Bradley, Eureka and Lincoln. The tennis team under Capt. Werner won 6, lost 1 and tied 1 dual meet.

The year 1927-28 brought Ned Whitesell and Norman Elliott to Wesleyan as football coaches. ~~Mr~~ Arthur Hill took Mr. Peter's place as physical director. The football team captained by Henry Lloyd won 6 games, lost 2 and tied 1. Coach Roettger's basketball team won its third consecutive championship, under Capt. Hugo Lindquist. Clarence Axene, captain-elect of the baseball team, did not return so the team elected Hugo Linquist. The team won its share of games. The track team under Capt. Dean Carter won 2 dual meets, lost 1 and got 1 point at the State meet. Don Karns was the track coach. Joe Baker was tennis captain. The season was not very successful. Kenneth McKay won the state golf title. The swimming team coached by student Bob Murray and captained by Jack Probasco won the conference swimming meet.