Pajama Parade, 55-Year Pass Highlighted First Homecoming

By GLENN F. BRADLEY, '39-'43

Norman Transcript Staff Writer

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 it say that quite a few will again be a “back to nature” movement such as marked the original University of Oklahoma homecoming on October 30, 1915.

Indeed, Sooner alumni returned to the University for a more conventional affair—dinner, receptions, class meetings and informal parties. But for the moment let’s go back to 1915—the year traditionally recognized as the first O. U. 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 Sooner—1,200 of them returned 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 game the following afternoon. “The pep demonstration held the night before the game was a striking event, one that brought staves from the eyes of even Norman residents, hardened though they were to yearsof ‘shirttail’ stares from the eyes of even Norman residents, hardened though they were to years of ‘shirttail’ stares from the eyes of even Norman residents, hardened though they were to years of ‘shirttail’ stares from the eyes of even Norman residents,” reads one account of the events.

“It was known as the ‘peripatetic pajama parade’ and the student newspaper reports that University ministers and professors wore up the flowing robes of Greek dancers; juniors appeared in flannel pajamas and the Ruf Nels, who, if memory serves me correctly, were first organized in 1915, went dressed as shipmates. ‘The ‘frash’ started a ‘back to nature’ movement but compromised on breevessd’”

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, students turned in their pajamas. Throughout the morning hundreds of students and grad visitors Dr. Brooks in the president’s office.

Two days after, 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 McCasland, a half-back, scored. The Sooners led 7-0 at halftime.

That 55-yard pass—which Hugh McDermott, now professor of physical education for men, remembers vividly—was a formative thing, still 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 and kicked the extra point. The Oklahoma offense—such as it was—was a freshman then, still on record as being one of the longest ever completed by a Sooner eleven.

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The School accepted it by acclamation.

Letters were written, samples collected, various combinations observed and a bundle of material was dropped at the alumni faculty agreed with Miss Overstreet’s choice, cream and crimson.

Fifty years ago this autumn another Kansas, V. Patterson, joined the University faculty. He had been associated with Emporia College. Patterson volunteered to act as coach in both football and baseball. In football—in its third year at Oklahoma City, 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 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 mops, one shaving brush, 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 for study, entertainment, 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 manager, Len 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 part of Pat O’Hara and Charles Laughton; the second lead in “Spanish Main,” with Main Putnam O’Hara and Paul Henreid; the lead in “Master Race,” and the lead in “The Story of Louis Pasteur,” opposite Robert Mitchum. While filming 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 her home. Once she attended 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 her work finishes, 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.
"I'm the supply member of the team"

"I help make your telephone service the world's best"

"Long before most of you were born—back in 1877—I started making telephone equipment for the nation.

"As the manufacturing and supply member of the Bell Telephone team, I've always had a lot to do with making your service the world's best—at the lowest possible cost.

"The close teamwork made possible by my being a part of the Bell System was never more important than today—in helping to meet record demands for telephone service.

"My name is Western Electric."
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 gaieties 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 Rippeto, '26ba, Oklahoma City visits with E. A. Shiner, '26bs, '28ms (standing 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.


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.