When a high school football team defeated our university

C. Ross Hume, '98, recalls start made by varsity in athletics

GRID-IRON MYTHS

I join the throng, the Boomer-band, Who now are lining-up; I hear the "Voice of Sooner-land," Say, "Friends, today we'll win."

The crowd, the yells, the plays, the cheers, All pass in swift review; Then I go back for thirty years, And early scenes renew.

The field, the teams, the games, my mates, And grid-iron myths of yore, Come rushing in; I'll now relate This O. U. football lore.

In the early nineties, Criss Cross was probably the first cub reporter on the campus. One lone publication, the Umpire, published semi-monthly was the sole source of school news, so he wrote the "University Notes" for the Norman Transcript. Out of that dim past he has stepped to tell some of the early incidents that are forerunners of football traditions known to all of you in the midst of this season of sport.

In the fall of 1895, John A. Hart, a former halfback from Winfield college came to Norman and proceeded to organize and coach the first team. No other student had ever seen a game, and in his mad rush he developed a "charley-horse," just before the first and only game of the year. In the early files of the Norman Transcript in the issue of December 20, 1895, I found:

"In the football game last Saturday between the team of Oklahoma City high school and that of the university here, the Oklahoma City boys came out victorious, the score being 34 to 0. The game lasted 70 minutes and was hotly contested, the Norman boys putting up a strong game even though they failed to score. Two of the university's best players were unable to play." Among the players were Jim Brown, captain, Ford, Bean, Clapham, Merkle, Barrow, and Mac key. The field was west of the fine arts building, and had smooth wire stretched around it to keep us off the field.

Having a team it was necessary to have a yell, and Cole, another Winfield man, suggested

"Hi-rickety-whoop-te-do; Terra-ga-hoo halia-baloo, Uni, Uni, Uni, U."

which was the official yell until the spring of 1898. A committee composed of Cole, Ray Hume, Ruth House, and Miss Overstreet chose cream and crimson for the colors which have remained to this day with change of shades.

In the fall of 1896 some students organized the team and played two games with Norman high, one at the high school building, and one in a field just west of the campus, in both of which the university was successful. Ray Hume was captain, and Criss Cross was quarterback the first game, after which he retired to the sidelines and was linemen and time-keeper for three years during the rest of his college career. This was the first "all victorious" team of the school, and not one later coached by Bennie. Remember that during these two years there were less than twenty-five college students and about 250 props so we did not have so great an advantage.

In the fall of 1897 the late Prof. V. L. Parrington came to the school, and besides his work in English became head coach. He developed the first real college team. C. C. Roberts was captain, and others were Ford, Mackey, Helley, Howell, the Merkles, Barrow, Clapham. The first game avenged the sting of Oklahoma's former victory. About five games in all were played, Kingfisher college, Arkansas City, and Fort Worth being among our rivals.

The team of 1898 played about six games, and as I recall the three center linemen weighed about 660 pounds, so there were giants in those days. The team of '99 was the last during my campus days. Temporary bleachers were made for that year, all the games to that date having been played in the northwest corner of the campus. Each team became some better as more men knew the game and larger enrollment gave more material to work with.

In 1903, I saw the first game with Kansas at Lawrence when Chester Reeds was captain, and that was the last time I ever acted as linesman. I was studying law there, and ever since have tried to attend Sooners-K. U. games.

About every other year I averaged a game at Norman until I began to return on Dad's day, during the past four years. I recall the first home-coming game in 1915, and after that I secured a history of the yell and colors which appears in the 1916 annual, duly certified and verified for future use.

This is the thirty-fifth annual football season and the fifteenth Homecoming, and I'll try again to be in the bleachers. The first seeds planted by Hart in the hearts of that early student body took deep root, and as we see the growth in efficiency of the team, and enthusiasm of the school we wonder what can be ahead of us. We have watched the wires, stretched along the sidelines to keep out a few, develop into the modest bleachers with hundreds, and grow into the stately stadium with its thousands, and realized that this has kept pace with other school activities. Other alumni and former students have the same longing which might be expressed

When to distant lands we roam, And we hear our college home Calling us again, we'll come To Dear Old Oklahoma.

Oklahoma, Here we stand; Oklahoma, Boomer-band, Oklahoma, Sooner-land, Oh, You, Oklahoma."