

The Stolen Championship of the Pottsville Maroons: A Case Study in the Emergence of Modern Professional Football

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Few sports aficionados (and even fewer scholars) are likely to have heard of the Pottsville Maroons. The Maroons were one of a myriad of now-defunct teams that played for the early National Football League. They were typical of these early professional teams in many ways, including their location in a relatively small city, their short life span, and the informality of their season scheduling. However, they were atypical of small city teams in several important ways. They were much more successful on the gridiron than most, boasting records of 10-2 and 16-2-1 in 1925 and 1926, respectively. Some argue that the Maroons won the 1925 NFL championship. They were so popular with their fans that many league teams (including the New York Giants!) gave up their home field advantage in order to enjoy the larger gates in or around Pottsville. The tremendous enthusiasm for football in Pottsville can be explained in large part by certain specific social characteristics of Pottsville and its surrounding area. In addition, the Maroons represented a transitional phenomenon from amateur teams composed largely of local players to the professional teams recruiting players from outside the local area.

The Social Setting

First, what was the social setting into which the Maroons were born? Pottsville, Pennsylvania is a city located 90 miles northwest of Philadelphia. The county seat of Schuylkill County, Pottsville is the commercial center for the

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southern hard coal region. In 1920, the region was dominated by the coal industry and was populated by a great many first and second generation Catholic immigrants of Eastern and Southern European or Irish descent, as well as more established residents of German, English and Welsh backgrounds.

Only half of the County's residents were native-born of native parents. In Pottsville itself, out of a population of 21,876 persons, 30 percent were either foreign-born or American natives with at least one foreign-born parent. The percentage of foreign-born and second generation Americans was much higher in nearby communities. In Minersville, where the Maroons' home games were actually played, only 37 percent of the 7,845 residents were native-born of native parents. Nearby Shenandoah, the largest community in the County with a population of 24,726, boasted a foreign-born population amounting to over 31 percent of its population, and half of the remainder had at least one parent born in the Old World.

The impact of the "new immigration" of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is clearly reflected in the birthplace of the County's foreign-born residents. Natives of Eastern and Southern Europe made up over 13 percent of the County's total population and over 82 percent of its foreign-born. In Shenandoah, immigrants from Poland and Lithuania alone accounted for a quarter of the city's population, comprising 34 and 44 percent respectively of its foreign-born members.¹

Ethnic and social class turmoil characterized the history of the region. Since the 1870s, absentee coal barons residing on the East Coast owned the major economic resources of the area. Social class conflict, most visibly manifested in the form of strikes by the coal miners, was a constant, part of the lives of Pottsville area residents. In addition, ethnic divisions and antagonisms between workers appeared early, were altered by the entrance of new groups, and were a constant point of conflict. The massive immigration of Irish laborers in the mid-nineteenth century, followed by the entrance of Eastern and Southern Europeans, created conflict over mining jobs, conflict which spilled over into other areas of life. Ethnic divisions created a significant amount of social disorder throughout the region; unified community interests failed to develop. Well into the twentieth century, the region could best be described as a series of antagonistic ethno-religious subcommunities, held together only by their mutual economic dependence on the coal mines.

At first glance, this setting would not appear to be a hospitable one for a professional football team. But in fact, the setting provides the key to an understanding of the Maroons' popular success. Wheeler's assertions concerning the role of sports in industrial capitalism are relevant:

Modern industrial capitalism destroyed the traditional order of society. (Two) important conse-

quences of this revolutionary transformation were the rationalization of the work process and the creation of a formal concept of leisure.²

No longer were work and leisure part of a relatively seamless whole of the life process. Rather, clearly marked divisions now existed between one's grueling work routine and one's leisure hours. Moreover, the pace of work in agrarian society which was somewhat relaxed, varied, and changed with the seasons, was transformed into the strict routine of industrial work tasks. Increasingly, some escape was seen to be needed from the hard, disciplined grind of industrialized work.³

Sports provided one such outlet, and were particularly attractive to men engaged in heavy physical tasks during their working hours. Coal miners are excellent cases in point.⁴

While these factors are relevant to all industrial areas of the time, it is the Pottsville area's ethno-religious make-up that provides the key for our understanding of football's development in the region. Here, Benjamin Rader's argument concerning sports and the quest for subcommunities is very useful. Rader defines ethnic and status subcommunities as particularly important to the rise of sports.

The Ethnic community usually arose from contradictory forces of acceptance and rejection of the immigrant by the majority society. The status community, by contrast, was a product of status equals who wanted to close their ranks from those considered inferior."

For both kinds of subcommunity, sports became very important.

Since sport per se was not threatening to deeply held personal beliefs and yet provided a milieu for fellowship and common purpose, the sport club was an attractive alternative to other forms of voluntary associations. Athletic activity, which is necessarily subordinated to rules, encouraged a temporary equality between members. The equality of play strengthened the bonds between members who might be divided by personal values. The sport club could be easily transformed into a multifaceted social agency. It could also be an instrument for social exclusion, for the socialization of youth, and for disciplining the behavior of its members. In short, the sport club assumed some of the traditional functions of the church, the state, and the geographic community.⁶

Both status and ethnic subcommunities had organized sports clubs and events in the Pottsville area since the nineteenth century. The local community's "upper crust" formed numerous cricket clubs before 1890. In 1905, the Outdoor Club was founded as an upper class club for tennis and social events. It was replaced in 1919 by the Schuylkill County Country Club. Local amateur and semiprofessional baseball was very popular before and after the turn of the century, with a number of local players eventually advancing to play in the major leagues. In the late nineteenth century, members of the lower class formed numerous boxing clubs, and the popularity of the sport was very widespread.⁷

Football in the Pottsville area did not begin through the efforts of athletic clubs per se; nor, as in the case of early football in the Pittsburgh area, were ivy league college graduates largely responsible for its genesis.⁸ Rather, amateur and semi-professional teams were formed by local towns and, in some cases, volunteer fire companies, and were manned largely by working class players. While not forming officially organized ethnic organizations, the teams and their supporters did operate to strengthen ethnic subcommunity ties, as most towns and hose companies were, in effect, ethnically segregated. Throughout the early twentieth century, teams of the lower anthracite region would carry on spirited contests, competing to become the champions of the hard coal region and to bring credit to their players and the ethnic groups they represented.⁹

The Maroon Saga

The Pottsville Maroons emerged from this setting in the immediate post-World War I era. Most people feel the Pottsville entry formed around the Yorkville Hose Company.¹⁰ By 1922, the team was sponsored by Harold Kingsbury, Irvin Heinz and Frank Shoeneman, three Pottsville businessmen, who hoped to profit financially from a successful football team. It was at this point that the importation of out of the region players commenced and the Minersville Ball Park about four miles from Pottsville was rented on a yearly basis. After bleachers were placed in the park, the team had a solid base.¹¹

In 1923, the Pottsville roster included nationally known college stars such as backs Benny Boynton and Carl Beck. Alvin “Doggie” Julian and Vic Emmanuel were also recruited.¹²

The early team retained many local players which had an appeal to the fans in the Pottsville area. According to former owner Harold Kingsbury, the “locals” were paid up to \$25 per game but the “college boys” could expect up to \$150 per contest, a figure Boynton received on joining the club.¹³

The 1924 Pottsville club dominated the other anthracite squads and played several successful exhibitions against teams from the fledgling National Football League. The most notable game was a O-O standoff with the NFL’s Frankford Yellowjackets. A public collection was begun to raise the price of an NFL franchise so that the club could enter the league. The people of the area responded quickly and Pottsville prepared for its maiden year in the NFL.

The origin of the name “Maroons” is not totally clear. Some feel the sobriquet was chosen because two of the Maroons’ 1925 recruits were Charlie Berry and Jack Ernst, both from Lafayette which used maroon uniforms. Others simply say that the team’s equipment manager and later crusading saint, Joe Zacko, had a set of maroon jerseys available prior to the first game of the 1925 season. Nonetheless, the 1925 Maroons were ready to take on the NFL.

Teams on the Maroon schedule in 1925 included Canton, Providence, Green Bay, Cleveland, Akron, Buffalo, Rochester, Frankford and Chicago. Excitement over the Maroons' playing was evident even before the season began. Large numbers of fans turned out to watch the team practice and to evaluate the new recruits. Enthusiasm increased still further after the Maroons beat their first NFL opponent, the Buffalo Bisons, 28-0.¹⁴

Nevertheless, the team found itself in financial difficulty. Renting a field on a regular basis and paying star players put great strains on the budget. The crisis was solved when a local surgeon, J. G. Striegel, purchased the team for \$1,500, and further backing was obtained through appeals to the public.¹⁵

By December 6, the Maroons were 9-2 and were set to face the Chicago Cardinals, 9-1-1, in the season finale. Since only one-half game separated these teams which stood in first and second place, the game was correctly hailed as for the "NFL Championship."¹⁶ (It must be remembered that no divisions existed in 1925. The NFL was one league-one division.)

The game was played in Chicago's Comiskey Park and the Maroons won easily, 21-7, thus defeating the team which a week earlier had held the Chicago Bears to a O-O tie. In that game the immortal Red Grange had made his professional debut. The convincing win allowed the Maroons to claim the NFL title. Newspapers around the country recognized their championship.¹⁷ However, a title won on the field would soon be jeopardized by off-the-gridiron developments.

The new "NFL Champions" agreed to play an exhibition on December 12th against the "Four Horsemen" of Notre Dame in Philadelphia's Shibe Park (later Connie Mack Stadium). The Four Horsemen included the recently graduated Notre Dame legends Don Miller, Jim Crowley, Harry Struhldreher and Elmer Layden. The rest of the team consisted of mainly Notre Dame alumni but were not the fabled "Seven Mules." The contest was labeled the "World Championship Game."¹⁸ Some still argue the game was the first of the "NFL Champions versus College All Star" events.

Even Knute Rockne attended the game. Never a great admirer of professional football, Rockne told his former players that he wouldn't attend the game. However, the great coach could not resist a look at his famed backfield and stealthfully entered Shibe Park. He hid from view behind a press box pole. Upon leaving, he remarked to a vendor that the boys looked "out of shape."¹⁹

Indeed, the lads from the hard coal land prevailed once again, 9-7. Charlie Berry's last minute field goal provided the measure of difference. Pottsville known as the "Queen of the Anthracite" could well hold her head high.²⁰

However, the Maroons joy was short-lived. The Frankford Yellowjackets who played just outside of Philadelphia claimed the game violated their territorial rights. An official protest was lodged with the Commissioner of the NFL after the Four Horsemen game was played. Commissioner Joe Carr ruled in favor of the Frankford charge.²¹ The rather severe penalty was in essence to strip the Maroons of the 1925 title. This was accomplished in a most bizarre manner. The second place Cardinals were ordered to play two more games. They played Milwaukee and Hammond which were weakened by the fact that many players had returned home since the regular season had ended. Chicago easily won the games. The quarters were actually shortened in one contest because of the Cardinals' obvious superiority. The net result was the Cardinals finished 11-2-1 to the Maroons, 10-2. Carr then promptly awarded the NFL crown to the Chicago eleven. One of the greatest injustices in NFL history had been perpetrated.²² Residents of the Pottsville area, led by sporting goods store owner, Joe Zacko, protested for years—in vain.

In 1963, an NFL committee consisting of Jack Mara of the Giants, Art Rooney of the Steelers and Frank McNamee of the Eagles investigated the Maroons' claim to the 1925 title. (Zacko finally had his day in court.) The NFL executive board however voted against the Pottsville claim, 12-2, in 1963. The three man committee had found validity in the Maroon argument but the club owners could not justify reclaiming the Cardinals' title (the Chicago Cardinals had become the St. Louis Cardinals by this point).²³ The case of the "Lost Championship" was closed as far as the NFL was concerned.

Undoubtedly, the most famous story surrounding the lost championship involved a bronzed shoe. Joe Zacko had the shoe Charlie Berry used to kick the game winning field goal against the Four Horsemen bronzed. (The shoe is currently owned by Russ Zacko of Pottsville in the name of his father's estate.) The football Hall of Fame wanted this shoe. Crusading Joe Zacko's simple answer was "the shoe for our Championship." The NFL refused to surrender the title and Zacko kept the shoe.²⁴

The 1925 Maroons, whether officially or not, were truly champions to their coal region followers. The people of the lower anthracite area gave great support to this mixture of local talent and college star recruits. In 1925 and 1926, the Maroons were home at the Minersville Park more than twice as frequently as they took to the road. This frankly reflected their drawing power relative to most other NFL entries. Many foes preferred the "guaranteed" crowds and gates in Pottsville to uncertainty at home. In October of 1926, the Maroons were to play New York Giants in New York. At the Giants' request, the game was moved to mid-way point Wilkes-Barre so the "coal Crowd" could be accommodated. (The Maroons prevailed 3-0 in the contest.)

An anecdote to the Maroon saga which testifies to the fans' devotion to them

surrounds the Cardinal “Championship” game in 1925. Since no radio coverage of the game was scheduled, Pottsvillians had a direct wire run from Comiskey Park to a local movie house. An attendant then moved figures on a giant score board to indicate play-by-play action. The theatre was allegedly so crowded that patrons were asked to stand rather than sit.²⁵

Though official figures do not exist, most felt the Maroons averaged 8,000 people per game at home in 1925-26. The attendance did falter in 1927 and 1928, the final two years the team played in Pottsville.²⁶

The teams deserved such support. The 1925 group outscored their opponents 333 to 52. The 16-2-1 1926 entry did even better. The point differential in 1926 was 392 to 29! The 1927 and 1928 teams played better than fair football. The records both approximated .500, but the dominance had definitely ended as the schedules toughened.

But a successful team is not enough in itself to bring about the kind of fan support enjoyed by the Pottsville Maroons. While one cause of the popularity of the earlier amateur teams of the region was the “safe” outlet for ethnic competition which football provided, perhaps the popularity of the Maroons was caused in part by the team’s transcendence of ethnic and religious divisions. The Maroons were cheered on by Pole, German, Lithuanian, and Welshman alike. As discussed above, in “real life,” the hard coal region did not form a community, but a series of ethnic enclaves, united with each other not on the basis of community or social feelings or interests, but only through economic interdependence.²⁷ But the Maroons allowed creation of a symbolic community, one where, for even a brief time, all people of the region could be unified by one overarching goal: Maroon triumph on the gridiron. In this way, the Maroons provide an example of the transition between the old and the new, between ethnic subcommunity teams manned by locals, and professional cosmopolitan teams consisting of talent recruited nationally. In this case, the Maroons’ function of creating a symbolic community is similar to that of modern professional sports teams in urban areas, where social class, ethnic, religious, and racial divisions are transcended through the collective ritual of rooting for one’s team.²⁸

The social class characteristics of the region also aided in generating the team’s popularity. The area was populated largely by members of the Catholic working class. Not yet assimilated into the mainstream of American life, unable to join tennis and country clubs, these people flocked to witness football contests. Like the bulk of its Pottsville fans, professional football itself was of low status. Making money in such a way was viewed as a corruption of the gentlemanly contest as practiced in college or club. Thus, with the Maroons, we find a low status sport providing entertainment and community for a low status working class population, whose sporting outlets were clearly limited.

However, even this community-creating function was not strong enough to allow the team to survive, once its dominance of the league was lost. Football was becoming big business, and only large metropolitan areas were able to financially support professional franchises. Dr. Striegel “loaned” the team to three players in 1928 then sold it to a Boston concern in 1929.²⁹ The Maroons played a farewell game in Pottsville late in the 1929 season. The Boston venture never fared well and the team eventually landed in Washington with the nickname Redskins.³⁰ Dr. Striegel was replaced by George Preston Marshall.³¹

The Maroons “peaked” in the mid 1920’s. There is irony in this fact. The lower anthracite region, Schuylkill County and Pottsville, also reached their zenith in this period. The 1920 census and coal production reports showed the area on the rise.³² By 1930, alternate fuels supplanted “King Coal.” The depression struck savagely at miners who had traditionally lived marginally in an economic sense. A mass exodus from the region began about the same time the area’s beloved Maroons migrated to Boston town. In the anthracite area they’ll always say things were never to be the same.

In retrospect, the Maroons can be viewed as a transitory link between the home town teams of the early 1920’s and the better organized and recruited metropolitan teams of a later era. While the 1925 “Champions” could boast of Shenandoah’s Frankie Racis, Pottsville’s native “Fungy” Lebengood and Barney Wentz of Shenandoah by way of Penn State, most of the team was recruited from outside the local area. The Maroons had recruits like Charley Berry, Benny Boynton, the Stein brothers, Russ Hathaway, Jack Ernst, Pete Henry, and Frank Bucher. All except Racis were college graduates who had shown their prowess on the collegiate gridiron.³³ Recruitment of college stars brought the playing of the Maroons to a very high level, while retention of three local players helped maintain the team’s unique connection with the region that spawned it and provided an additional box office draw. The Maroons were indeed a unique mixture of the old and new ways of molding football teams. The method proved able to make money in a lightly populated area on a sport which was certainly not a rage with the national populace.

The Maroons were transitional in other ways, also. They initiated several football innovations. The 1925 coach, Dick Rauch of Penn State, was one of the first major league coaches to insist on daily practice. This necessitated that his players reside near Pottsville during the season. It also hurt local players because those who worked the mines could not attend daily afternoon workouts. Rauch believed in non-contact practice once the season began.³⁴ The Maroons also pioneered the now famous “taxi squad” concept. They usually dressed (and paid) only fifteen men. However, ten others usually worked out with the club and filled in case of injury.³⁵ The Maroons were early exponents of the screen pass. The maneuver would now be illegal because it in-

volved linemen going downfield before the pass. Frank Racis, a guard, described a unique unbalanced line formation through which he became an eligible pass receiver.³⁶

The Maroons also illustrate the legendary proportions many athletic entities assumed through the years. Running guard Duke Osborne never wore a helmet. He donned only a rumpled baseball hat. The “Duke” played the full sixty minutes despite his lack of protection. By his own account, Frank Racis, the native Schuylkill Countian, wore a brown derby hat through part of one 1928 game to plug the presidential campaign of Al Smith. Racis emerged from the game unscathed. Smith had notably worse luck against Hoover in the election. Hall of Famer Peter “Fats” Henry drop kicked a 53 yard field goal for the Maroons in their pre-NFL days. Red Grange once termed Tony Latone, a Maroon back, the toughest runner he had ever come up against.³⁷

The Maroons could also be viewed as a way for young men to make enough money to establish firm financial footings. The pay was surprisingly good for the 1920s’. It is generally agreed that linemen received in excess of \$100 per game and backs over \$150. There was usually a differential paid to bigger name college stars. A living ex-Maroon, guard Frank Racis, said he received \$75 per game in 1925, \$100 in 1926 and \$137.50 in 1927.³⁸ Many feel some of the “All-American” type recruits received upwards of \$200 per game. When it is considered that the schedules including exhibitions ran twenty games, a young Maroon could make about \$2500 in three months and still have a nine month off season to supplement his gridiron income.

In fact, many Maroons did become financially successful. Charley Berry became Umpire in Chief of the American League. Russ Hathaway, a scholar-athlete in college, came to own a chain of food stores. Frank Bucher rose to be chairman of the board of the A&P Corporation. The Stein brothers, Russ and Herb, succeeded in the apartment development and metal business in the mid-West. “Hoot” Flanagan, a Maroon end, was a successful West Virginia dentist. Duke Osborne became a general superintendent for Oldsmobile’s assembly division.³⁹ There can be little doubt that Maroon money aided the rise of these young men. Their “upward mobility” suffered no damage because of their sojourns in Pottsville.⁴⁰

Conclusions

The Pottsville Maroons were located in a socially disorganized area which was full of ethnic and social class conflict. Amateur and semi-professional teams composed of local ethnic workingmen had carried on spirited, hard-hitting contests for years, creating much enthusiasm for the sport in the region. Rader’s thesis concerning ethnic subcommunities helps us to understand why early football was popular in the region.⁴¹ Football helped solidify the

various ethnic groups in an often antagonistic environment, while at the same time providing a safe outlet for ethnic conflict.

However, with the advent of the Maroons, football's function in the region changed. The Maroons gained support from the entire community; their popularity while especially strong among working class Catholics, cut across all social divisions. Rooting for the Maroons allowed people to transcend their ethnic and class positions, creating a symbolic community where no real community existed. Perhaps in this way, the Maroons can be seen as one case in the transition of football's functions from helping to solidify a subcommunity, to creating an overarching symbolic community.

The Maroons can be seen as transitional in other ways as well. They represent the change from amateur and semi-professional teams composed largely of local residents, to professional teams recruiting players from outside the local area. They represent the growing importance of money in sports, both for the players and for the backers, with the profit motive becoming increasingly important as a reason for sponsoring or playing for a team. Ironically, the Maroons' eventual demise in Pottsville was the result of the growing acceptance of professional football, which made the financial stakes grow to a point where only large metropolitan areas could support a professional team.

Finally, the saga of the Pottsville Maroons presents a very different scenario from the one presented by Able, who described the start of professional football in Western Pennsylvania.⁴² There, football was organized from the "top down," being started by former college players through high status athletic clubs. In Pottsville, the game moved from the "bottom up," beginning as ethnic working class contests and only later involving college graduates. We can only speculate as to why football was embraced by members of the working class and upper class alike—surely there is more to it than the *nouveau riche's* embracing of Victorian ideology, as suggested by Jable. What is more certain is that common motives were behind moves to professionalize in Pottsville and Pittsburgh—the motives of winning and of making money. In Western Pennsylvania, the athletic clubs' coffers were swelled; in Pottsville, the entrepreneurs who owned the team hoped to reap financial profits; and in both cases, gambling on football games was far from unknown. Once it was shown that profits could be made from the game, the gentlemanly, amateur ideal of the college and club games, and the local, ethnic emphasis of working class football, began to erode. The transition to modern football as part of the national culture and as big business had begun.

Notes

1. Material on the social and economic history of this interesting region is drawn from Harold Aurand, *From the Molly Maguires to the United Mine Workers* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1971); Rowland Berthoff, "The Social Order of the Anthracite Region, 1825-1902," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, (1965), pp. 261-91; William Gudelunas and Stephen R. Couch, "Would a Protestant or Polish Kennedy Have Won? A Local Test of Ethnicity and Religion in the Presidential Election of 1960," *Ethnic Groups*, 3 (1980), pp. 1-21; William Gudelunas and William Shade, *Before the Molly Maguires* (New York: Arno Press, 1976); and Clifton K. Yearley, Jr., *Enterprise in Anthracite* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1961).
2. Robert F. Wheeler, "Organized Sport and Organized Labour: The Workers' Sports Movement," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 13 (1978), p. 191.
3. See John R. Betts, *America's Sporting Heritage* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1974); Richard Lipsky, "Toward a Political Theory of American Sports Symbolism," *American Behavioral Scientist*, 21 (1978), pp. 345-60; and F. Paxon, "The Rise of Sport," in *Sport and Society*, ed., George H. Sage (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1970), pp. 19-35.
4. It was during the rise of industrial capitalism that sports which had been played primarily by members of the upper class were appropriated by working class people. Unionization was important here, as it helped shorten the working day, giving laborers the leisure time in which to play sports. It was not long before working class men began earning money through sports participation. For a discussion of these developments in England, see Wheeler (op. cit.), and for American baseball, see David Q. Voigt, *America Through Baseball* (Chicago, 1976).
5. Benjamin G. Rader, "The Quest for Subcommunities and the Rise of American Sport," *American Quarterly*, 29 (1977), p. 357.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 357.
7. Joseph H. Zerby (ed.), *History of Pottsville and Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania* (Pottsville, PA: J. H. Zerby Newspapers, 1936), pp. 128-43, 179-83, 199-218.
8. J. Thomas Jable, "The Birth of Professional Football: Pittsburgh Athletic Clubs Ring in Professionals in 1892," *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, (1979), pp. 131-47. Numerous interesting although speculative theories exist concerning why football was and is popular with members of various social classes and ethnic groups. In *The Joy of Sports*, Michael Novak views the solidarity of football and its ritualistic violence as being attractive to immigrants and corporate managers alike (New York: Basic Books, 1976, pp. 75-91). Others argue that sports were seen as an excellent means of teaching dominant capitalist values, such as competition, sportsmanship, and fair play; see Lipsky, op. cit.; and Shirley Fiske, "Pigskin Review: An American Institution," in *Sport in the Socio-Cultural Process*, ed., Marie Hart (Dubuque, IA: William C. Brown, 1972), pp. 241-59.
9. Interview with former Maroon co-sponsor Harold Kingsbury, January 23, 1981.
10. This information and much of what follows, was obtained through an interview with Harold Kingsbury, op. cit. See also Joseph C. Zacko, *The Pottsville Maroons Testimonial and Reunion Books* (Pottsville, PA, 1963), pp. 4-5.
11. Kingsbury stated that the bleachers cost \$1500 and were paid for by the team owners.
12. Zacko, op. cit., p. 4.
13. Kingsbury, op. cit.
14. *Pottsville Republican*, Sept. 14 and 28, 1925.
15. *Ibid.*, Oct. 14, 15, and 16, 1925.
16. *Ibid.*, Dec. 1, 1925.
17. *Ibid.*, Dec. 7, 1925; Zacko, op. cit., p. 69.
18. *Pottsville Republican*, Dec. 9, 1925; Zacko, op. cit., p. 45.
19. John McCallum and Paul Castner, *We Remember Rockne* (Huntingdon, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1975), p. 98.
20. *Pottsville Republican*, Dec. 14, 1925. For details of the Four Horsemen contest see Zacko, op. cit., p. 32. A famous Pottsville sportswriter of the period, Walter S. Farquhar, actually related the game in verse. The poem is printed in Zacko's works op. cit., p. 30.
21. *Pottsville Republican*, Dec. 30, 1925.
22. Circumstances surrounding the situation will probably forever remain clouded at best. Dr. Striegel claimed to have obtained "verbal" approval from an aide of Carr's to play the game. For more details see Zacko, op. cit., p. 46. The argument used by Maroon supporters in 1963 is found in the Zacko work op. cit., p. 62.
23. Zacko, op. cit., p. 60.
24. Zacko, op. cit., p. 59.

25. This anecdote was related by former Maroon mascot William Dimmerling in an interview on January 10, 1981. See also *Pottsville Republican*, Dec. 7, 1925.

26. According to Kingsbury, profits were realized even in the non-NFL years of 1922, 1923, and 1924.

27. As Rowland Berthoff, *op. cit.*, argues, the county was characterized by a lack of community and high degree of social disorganization throughout the late nineteenth century. This was still the case during the 1920's, although the economic prosperity of the period tempered the sometimes virulent economic competition of the various ethno-religious groups.

28. For a discussion of college football operating as a collective experience—for spectators and players alike, see Fiske, *op. cit.* Some argue that sports is at least as effective an "opiate of the masses" as is religion. See Wheeler, *op. cit.*; and Eldon E. Snyder "Sociology of Sports: Concepts and Theories," *Journal of Popular Culture* 8 (1974), pp. 361-69.

29. The players were Pete Henry, Herb Stein and Duke Osborne.

30. Some NFL records question this Pottsville-Boston-Washington connection. The NFL cites the Maroons moving to Boston in 1929, and being named the Boston Braves. In 1930 and 1931, no Boston team was fielded. In 1932, a Boston Braves team played again. This team changed its name to the Redskins in 1933 and moved to Washington in 1937, where it has been playing ever since. Because no Boston team played during 1930 and 1931, the NFL considers the 1932 Braves to be a new franchise unrelated to the Maroons.

31. Interview with Frank Racis, 1925 Maroon guard, January 22, 1981. Frank Racis, a native Schuylkill Countian who starred with the 1925 Maroons, said that some of the Maroons went to Boston in 1929. This appears to indicate at least some connection between the Boston and Pottsville franchise.

32. The Schuylkill County coal production figures reached their peace time peaks in 1924. The following table indicates the severity of the decline which followed this mid-1920's zenith.

Schuylkill County Coal Figures

<i>Year</i>	<i>Tons Mined</i>	<i>Anthracite Employees</i>
1924	19,238,222	37,000
1930	15,673,000	33,000
1935	12,911,938	20,000
1968	4,297,000	2,646

Source: Pennsylvania Dept. of Mines, *Annual Report* (Harrisburg, 1924, 1930, 1935, 1968).

33. Frank Racis attended only a few days of "sister school" in his life. However, Maroon programs listed him as attending colleges like Harvard, Yale, and even Oxford. Racis said he concluded Oxford was most fitting and finally settled on that "alma mater."

34. Racis, *op. cit.*

35. Interview with Joseph Hauptly, former Maroon, January 23, 1981. Hauptly was a miner who found it difficult to make 1925 practices. He was replaced at end by "college star" Charley Berry who obviously made the workouts.

36. Racis, *op. cit.*

37. Grange played briefly in the Minersville Park in 1926. Local legends have it that he received \$250 for every "half" he played. The Maroons' tackling stung him enough that he didn't appear in the second half, forfeiting \$250 rather than face further Maroon ferocity.

38. Racis, *op. cit.* Racis wanted \$150. Striegel offered \$125. The settlement was \$137.50. Road food allowances averaged \$3 daily. Racis stated that salaries were lowered in the last year of the team's existence in Pottsville.

39. A study of the 1926 through 1928 teams indicates much the same success ratio. Facts concerning these men were derived from short biographies in Maroon reunion books, newspaper obituaries and interviews with people who stayed in contact with individual Maroons. A special thanks to Russell Zacko and William Dimmerling who were most helpful in this phase of the study. Of the fifteen men on the Maroons' 1925 roster, one died in World War II, one became a foreman in a factory, and all others became successful businessmen or professionals.

40. Studies of success and upward mobility among some recent college football teams also indicate that football players fare exceptionally well; for example, see Allen L. Sack and Robert Thiel, "College Football and Social Mobility: A Case Study of Notre Dame Football Players," *Sociology of Education*, 52 (1979), pp. 60-66; and John W. Loy, "Social Origins and Occupational Mobility Patterns of a Selected Sample of American Athletes," *International Review of Sport Sociology*, 7 (1972), pp. 5-23. Sack and Thiel wonder if fame, and therefore connections, is a major reason, or if the personal characteristics for football success are the same as those needed for success in life. Since professional football in the 1920s generated little status and few social connections for its players, our study tends to support the latter view. But in the case of the professional Maroon players, the money amassed by playing may be the most important factor of all.

41. Rader, *op. cit.*

42. Jable, *op. cit.*