

The Moral Threat of Intercollegiate Sports: An 1893 Poll of Ten College Presidents, and the End of "The Champion Football Team of the Great West"

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Resolved: That as ministers of the Kansas conference, being more fully convinced than ever that intercollegiate games are dangerous physically, useless intellectually, and detrimental morally and spiritually, we respectfully request, with renewed emphasis, the trustees and faculties of our institutions of learning to do all in their power to abolish such games.¹

So announced the Popular Amusements Committee of the 1894 Kansas Methodist Conference which gathered in Abilene. The focus of this resolution was the new game of intercollegiate football played by the pioneer university in Kansas, Baker University, established by the Kansas Methodist Conference in 1858. Against teams from the state universities of Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri, Topeka's Washburn University, the Kansas City YMCA, and the Denver Athletic Club, Baker had racked up an imposing winning record in the years 1890-93. But the game it played posed a complex of moral threats to traditional pietism, whose denominational forebears had established the majority of colleges in the United States from colonial times until after the Civil War.

In the 1890s, "frontier religions" such as Methodists and Baptists most actively demonstrated this pietism which once had been promoted by the entire evangelical-pietistical tradition. The pietist critique of intercollegiate football saw it inextricably linked to alcohol, sabbath-breaking, gambling, de-civilizing public violence, and the sinful waste of youthful blood and time.² The strength

1. Popular Amusements Committee report in *Kansas Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Official Minutes of the Thirty-ninth Session, Held at Abilene, Kansas, March 7-12, 1894* (Edwin Locke, Publisher: n.d.), 32.

2. Denominational examples of the evangelical-pietistical tradition include Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Disciples of Christ, various Reformed churches, and Quakers. Members of these groups had strong revivalistic tendencies and emphasized a personal relationship with God; they expected their members to exhibit signs of redemption through moral behavior (hence the term "pietists"). They were most likely total abstainers and temperance campaigners, and anti-sport to the degree that saloons, sports, mass games, and gambling were connected. See Robert S. Bader, *Prohibition in Kansas: A History* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1986), 11. Of the nine colonial colleges, three had foundations outside the above denominations. Episcopalians founded William and Mary, and King's College and College of Philadelphia were sectarian or Episcopal depending on your sources. Of the forty colleges founded 1780-1829, twenty-two were by the

of this tradition can be seen in the 1894 resolution by the Methodists at Abilene, a tougher version of an 1893 attempt by the same committee "to discourage" intercollegiate games. Baker had ignored the 1893 directive, went on to an unbeaten season that year, and called down upon itself charges of "rebellion." In 1894 then, joined by the Education Committee which specifically controlled Baker, the democracy of Kansas Methodist ministers decreed the end to intercollegiate games at the champion school.

Jim L. Sumner's recent article, "John Franklin Crowell, Methodism, and the Football Controversy at Trinity College, 1887-1894" in this journal discussed the abolition of football at Trinity (now Duke University) in North Carolina as a result of a power struggle between a progressive outsider and the school's conservative constituents who emphasized the sport's negative attributes. Baker University's story represents a similar outcome in a comparable case at the same time in the West. It delineates, moreover, the moral attitudes which underlay the strong reaction against intercollegiate sports in both Kansas and North Carolina. A poll of Methodist college presidents by Baker's head, and the actions of church conference committees, show both the explicit and the veiled criticism of intercollegiate sports. This focus helps explain a part of Sumner's conclusion: "For the most part the charges mounted against Trinity football by the Methodist community were vague and nebulous, almost generic. . . . Clearly intercollegiate football at Trinity had taken on a symbolic importance all out of proportion to its real significance on campus."³

The Baker case suggests that what Sumner called the incommensurate "symbolic importance" of football, along with its "firestorm" of criticism generated at Trinity, existed because of pietistic ideas of education seated deep in the colonial origins of the nation. The emotional debate about educational purposes and intercollegiate athletics continues one hundred years after the Baker and Trinity cases-somewhat secularized and the NCAA notwithstanding; this suggests that in the image of sport, "sin issues" such as alcohol and gambling have a radical persistence.

Pietism and Strenuousity

Intercollegiate sports, particularly football, came to be the clear battleground for these traditional pietists to combat the "national sporting ideology" which emerged after the Civil War. This was a conflict within Christianity itself as well as with larger society, since an important part of the sporting ideology was "muscular Christianity." This notion of a Christ-like strenuousity and manliness sought to reinvigorate and redeem *homo urbans* from a too-decorous American Protestantism with its stress on the "effeminate" qualities of softness and submission.⁴

evangelistic-pietistic denominations, eleven by the states, six by Episcopalians, one by Catholics. William Warren Sweet, *Indiana Asbury-DePauw University, 1837-1937* (New York: Abingdon, 1937), 11-25. Ronald A. Smith, *Sports and Freedom: The Rise of Big-Time College Athletics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 8-10. This work is the most valuable overview of sports and American society.

3. Sumner, *Journal of Sport History* 17 (Spring, 1990): 5-20.

4. Benjamin G. Rader, *American Sports from the Age of Folk Games to the Age of Spectators* (Englewood

Various writers have seen the connection of the closed frontier, expanding industrialism, and urbanization with the popularization of sport and its use as a new image of virility. "Football, considered the most manly of college sports at the close of the nineteenth century, could provide the proof that colleges as institutions, as well as college men, were virile. Athletic prowess of a college football player was a marked contrast to the pale, dyspeptic scholar of an earlier time."⁵ The pietists of the 1890s felt more was at stake than being thought a sissy. The moral values of the pale scholar of an earlier time were permanent and civilizing, and were being threatened by the late century rise of intercampus ritual warfare with its "barbarous ethics," to use a phrase of President Charles Eliot of Harvard. Though Eliot was not a pietist, he was the most prestigious educator of the period to offer moral criticism of college football which all abolitionists of the sport, pietists or not, could use.⁶

Early American forebears of the pietists of the 1890s disapproved of athletic recreations of all kinds. "The preachers' part in sport was that of offering adverse criticism, ever admonishing the people to refrain for participating in such vice as amusements if they expected to be prepared to appear at the throne of God."⁷ Eighteenth-century American colleges and their products displayed negative attitudes to sport: "I was not sent to this world to spend my days in sports, diversions and pleasures . . ." wrote John Adams.⁸ A century earlier, the Laws of Harvard College, Adams' alma mater, warned the student not to absent himself from studies "upon any pretense of recreation" but "he shall studiously redeeme his time. . . ."⁹ We have an eighteenth-century definition by the founder of Methodism, John Wesley, of what this Pauline injunction meant: ". . . saving all the time you can for the best purposes; buying up every fleeting moment. . . out of the hands of sloth, ease, pleasure, worldly business; the more diligently, because the present 'are evil days,' . . ."¹⁰ To play is to waste time, to waste time is to sin.

Even innocent amusements dissipated the mind, while the excess excitement of games aroused the passions. An exhausted and thirsty body, wrote a 1794 publicist, would welcome more readily the stimulating draught, and thus the path of amusement was likely to become the broad way to destruction.¹¹ From

Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1983). 146-151, sums up the literature on muscular Christianity and strenuousness; see also the differently-organized second edition of this book (1990), 122-125, 211-215. Also helpful is John A. Lucas and Ronald A. Smith, *Saga of American Sport* (Philadelphia: Lea & Febiger, 1978) 287-302.

5. Smith, *Sports and Freedom*, 96.

6. Charles Eliot, "The Evils of Football," *Harvard Graduates Magazine* 13 (March, 1905): 383-387. (See Lucas and Smith, *Saga of American Sport*, 240, 288, for Eliot's change of mind on college football from the 1880s to the 1890s.) The opposition to intercollegiate sports in publicly-supported antebellum schools needs exploring, as well as effects of the national sporting ideology on them after the Civil War.

7. Jennie Holliman, *American Sports (1785-1835)* (1931; rep. ed., Philadelphia: Porcupine Press, 1975), 183-184.

8. Philip Greven, *The Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child-Rearing, Religious Experience, and the Self in Early America* (New York: Knopf, 1977) 253.

9. Smith, *Sports and Freedom*, 9.

10. John Wesley, "On Redeeming the Time," *Sermons on Several Occasions* (New York: Lane & Scott, 1850) 2:294. The marketplace connotation of "redeeming" is present in St. Paul's koine Greek—"exagorazomenoi," *Ephesians* 5:16.

11. *The New York Magazine*, V, 656 (1794) quoted in Holliman, *American Sports*, 179.

the first, athletics implied alcohol, and almost as bad, betting. In his sermons Wesley lumped together “. . . a gamester, a woman hunter, a play house hunter, a fox hunter, or a shatterbrain of any kind. ” “Gamester” meant both athlete and gambler in the eighteenth century; in a sermon relating the history of the Sabbatarian movement, Wesley set apart gamblers as a subgroup of gamesters: “In clearing the streets, fields, and ale houses of sabbath breakers, they fell upon another sort of offenders, as mischievous to society as any; namely, gamesters of various kinds. Some of these were of the lowest and vilest class



Courtesy of Baker University Archives.

commonly called gamblers; . . .¹²

“The students shall be indulged with nothing which the world calls *play*” read the rules of the first American Methodist college, Cokesbury, founded in 1784. Instead, their outdoor recreations were to be gardening, walking, riding, and

12. Wesley, *Sermons* 2: 193; *Sermons* 1: 460. *The Oxford English Dictionary* (1971) notes a 1775 usage contemporary with Wesley of “gamester” meaning a player on a team. By the nineteenth century it appears that “gamester” had increasingly come to mean a gambler.

bathing. Indoors, carpentry and fine woodcrafting would occupy their time. When Bishops Asbury and Coke wrote “we prohibit *play* in the strongest terms” they did not adduce scripture but the more worldly sources of Locke and Rousseau, as well as Peter the Great and Virgil. Gardening would “delightfully unite” poetry and exercise for the student, which employments should never be turned into “drudgery or slavery, but into pleasing recreations for the mind and body.”¹³ This was strongly Wesleyan, for John Wesley, though he had played sports at Oxford, suggested as a preacher that if men wanted diversion in the open air, then horticultural pursuits were “the more excellent way.”¹⁴

The Case of Baker University

The “Champion football team of the great West,” crowed the Denver journal, *Western Athletics*, about the Baker University team of 1893. “They have met and conquered the best football talent west of the Mississippi.” Baker University, the oldest four-year college in Kansas, had won its first victory in 1890 in the first Western college football game. Baker, on its home field in Baldwin, beat Kansas University that November day by a score of 22-9 and then repeated its win on K.U.’s ground in Lawrence on December 8.¹⁵ The Baker Orange had impressive seasons in following years, having the benefit of a student-coach in ‘90 and ‘91, Salem Goodale, who had learned the game at Lake Forest College, and a paid coach-captain-player in ‘92, Frank Crawford, who had learned the game at Yale and brought many innovations, such as a training table. Baker was state champion in 1890, 1892, and 1893. Its great team of 1893 shut out not only Kansas Wesleyan and Doane colleges, but also Missouri (28-0) and the tough Denver Athletic Club (32-0), beat K.U. twice, tied Nebraska, and so became the “Western Champions.”¹⁶

Football had been on campus in an unorganized way at Baker since about 1887. By 1889 interest in football had begun to blossom in Kansas, following early agitation for the sport in the Washburn University *Argo*. The triangular league of Washburn, Kansas, and Baker Universities reportedly formed in 1889, although any games played were not recorded.¹⁷ But on February 15, 1890

13. “The Plan for Erecting a College,” “General Rules Concerning the College,” and “Rules for the Economy of the College and Students,” in Nathan Bangs, *A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church I* (New York: Mason and Lane, 1838), 230-240.

14. Wesley, *Sermons* 2: 272, in which he specifically spoke of “men of fortune” who presumably had land and leisure for horticultural diversions.

15. *Western Athletics* (Denver), January, 1894, a holographic fair copy in correspondence of Arza B. Fogle, Jr. to Baker President Ralph M. Tanner, December 30, 1893 in Football Files, Archives, Baker University (hereafter cited as Football Files). The Topeka *Capital* reported the 1890 game as football’s “first introduction into Western Colleges,” Harold C. Evans, “College Football in Kansas,” *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 9 (August, 1940): 286. *Daily Journal World* (Lawrence, Ks.), November 24 and December 9, 1890.

16. M. S. Dudgeon, “History of Athletics,” *Baker Beacon*, Souvenir Edition, May 15, 1893, 24-26. *Orange Blossom* ‘95, Baker University annual, May, 1894, 94-97. Homer K. Ebright, *The History of Baker University* (Baldwin, Ks.: Baker University, 1951), 135-137. Biographies of the 1892 team appear in *Baker Beacon*, December 6, 1892; Crawford was listed as an 1890 graduate of Yale who was currently finishing his last year of law school at the University of Michigan. For Crawford’s innovations, see *Kansas City Star*, December 6, 1893.

17. Dudgeon, “History of Athletics,” 24-25; Evans, “College Football in Kansas,” 285-286; Fred Lane, “Baker’s Past Football Record Shows Long Line of Victories,” *Baker Orange*, November 26, 1929, reported that regular season play with match games began in 1889, but “no record . . . remains.” The triangular league “sought to foster . . . tennis matches and football games;” each team played every other team twice, once at home and once at the opponent’s field, for the conference pennant.

representatives met at Lawrence to form the Kansas Intercollegiate Athletic Association. At Baker then, in 1890 under the organization of player-coach Salem Goodale, contemporary rules were applied and “for the first time in Kansas a rush-line lined up for scrimmage.”¹⁸

Baker football also had a strongly supportive president, William Alfred Quayle, a Kansas-raised Greek scholar who later became a famed preacher-actor, literary critic, nature writer, and Bishop. When chosen in 1890 to be Baker’s President, the 30-year-old Quayle was called the youngest college president in the country.¹⁹ He became a classic advocate of “muscular Christianity.” At Baker he promoted with equal vigor Christianity, football, and poetry. But Baker’s hot football team, ostensibly because of injuries inflicted on its opponents by mass plays and the flying wedge (first used in the Harvard-Yale game of 1892), was threatened in 1893 and 1894 by anti-sport pietists whose beliefs clashed with the new sports ideology epitomized by Quayle.

The ensuing debate on intercollegiate athletics went deeper than the problem of injuries. Campus enthusiasm after beating the K.U. Crimson 18-0 in 1892 created a celebration bonfire in downtown Baldwin, and a shopkeeper’s sign was thrown in the embers. Later, allegations about the conduct of some football players caused the offended players to instigate a church trial to vindicate their honor, which was eventually done. But the trial dragged on many months and tried the community’s patience and made it overly sensitive to the football question. Quayle steadfastly stood up for the football players.²⁰ As Baker’s victories brought hostility instead of honor from the Methodist Conference, Quayle polled Methodist schools across the country during the spring of 1893 to gauge the national dimensions of the problem and perhaps to document the case for football at the next conference meeting in 1894. Responses to Quayle’s simple request to “write me the view you entertain concerning inter-collegiate games and the practice in your University” have survived from Northwestern, Allegheny, Cornell College, DePauw, Boston University, Dickinson, Syracuse, Illinois Wesleyan, Ohio Wesleyan, and Denver University.

Responses to Quayle’s Poll

In summary, responses of these ten presidents ranged from one with detailed moral and practical criticism (Cornell College in Iowa), to one with a positive view (University of Denver). Responses in between saw intercollegiate athletics as a “necessary evil,” (Allegheny, Syracuse, Illinois Wesleyan); some saw bad and good (Northwestern, Dickinson). Other respondents reported their schools’

18. Introduction to “Kansas College Athletic Conference Constitution,” 11-page typescript (n.d.) in Football Files; representatives were present from at least the triangular league schools and Kansas Agricultural College. They elected F. H. Kellogg of K.U. the first president and their purpose was “to promote and regulate amateur intercollegiate athletics.” Dudgeon, “History of Athletics,” 25.

19. Quayle (1860-1925) is a distant relative of U.S. Vice President J. Danforth Quayle. On his youthful assumption of the presidency, see Merton S. Rice, *William Alfred Quayle, The Skylark of Methodism* (New York: Abingdon, 1928), 84. A recent assessment calls Quayle’s writings “perhaps the fullest expression” of the American Protestant gospel of the outdoors; Leigh E. Schmidt, *Harvard Theological Review* 84 (July, 1991): 306.

20. On the football celebration, *Baker Beacon*, November 22 and 29, 1892; on the church trial, *Baker Beacon*, March 27, 1894.



W. A. Quayle D. D. Ph.D., president of Baker University. Courtesy of Baker University Archives.

policies without moral opinions, or only implied them (DePauw, Boston University, Ohio Wesleyan). The presidents often seemed to view themselves as intermediaries rather than authorities on the question of intercollegiate sports, a view borne out in Ronald A. Smith, *Sports and Freedom*.²¹

Intercollegiate games are not to be encouraged, replied Henry Wade Rogers, president of Northwestern University: "There should be no more of them than is necessary to keep up a reasonable interest in athletics." Northwestern regulated

21. These ten letters in William Alfred Quayle Files, Archives, Baker University (hereafter cited as Quayle Files). See Smith, *Sports and Freedom*, 97, 215-216, on college presidents and their ineffectiveness as leaders in athletic policy.

athletics by a faculty committee which passed on every game schedule and left final authority to the president. The university had adopted rules in 1892 which forbade competition with professional teams, established academic standards for athletes, and put in place the administrative controls he mentioned.** Rogers, a dynamic builder of Northwestern who ten years hence would be chosen Dean of Yale law school, believed in the worth of simple athletics. He once wrote that athletics "teach self-mastery, the ability to control one's temper, and to work with others. They demand steadiness of nerve, coolness, self-reliance, the subordination of animal impulses." He also believed they reduced college pranks by venting "the excess of animal spirits." As injuries increased, he asked the faculty in 1895 to consider dropping football, but to no avail.²³

D. H. Wheeler, head of Allegheny College, saw all athletics as morally problematic: "I regard athletic sports as a kind of necessary evil with possible good which I am not clear about. We have no settled policy; we grant excuses from class work to a limited extent. As yet we have no large [illegible] of this nature."²⁴

The most prophetic of all replies came from W. F. King, the 30-year president of Cornell College in Iowa: "let me say that we are embarrassed at Cornell College in respect to intercollegiate games; but are compelled to yield somewhat to public sentiment . . . [one restriction] is that they shall not be absent from school duties; another that they shall not accept an invitation where traveling on the Sabbath will be required." Then he brought to the surface what other college heads had only darkly hinted:

The hot competition in these games stimulates certain unfortunate practices, such as the admission of professionals into college as nominal students at the expense of the team, tendencies to betting, the limitation of the benefits of the game to a very few persons, and with these the interest is too intense to be compatible with educational advantages. The matter is in a transition state with us. What the outcome will be I cannot say.²⁵

King's list foreshadowed the problems of the next 100 years of intervarsity athletics.

DePauw University's president John P. D. John seemed the most prepared with a new system of rules adopted by the university senate which he sent to Quayle. "It is the judgment of our Faculty that these rules . . . will obviate the chief objections to intercollegiate games. . . . These rules have not been in operation long enough to offer a basis for a just comparison with the former condition, but the prospects are that the system under these regulations will be greatly in advance of anything that has hitherto prevailed here."²⁶

John's allusion to "the former condition" meant the use of professional

22. Rogers to Quayle, May 11, 1893, Quayle Files.

23. Harold F. Williamson and Payson S. Wild, *Northwestern University: A History 1850-1975* (Evanston: Northwestern University, 1976), 91. *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (James T. White & Co., 1904) is a supplementary source on these presidents and their schools.

24. Wheeler to Quayle, May 9, 1893, Quayle Files.

25. King to Quayle, May 12, 1893, Quayle Files.

26. John to Quayle, May 10, 1893, Quayle Files.

players. In the era before regulation, students alone initiated and ran athletic contests. Eligibility abuses occurred as early as the second intercollegiate meeting on record, the 1855 Harvard-Yale boat race, where the Harvard coxswain was not a student, but an alumnus. From this conflict came the first intercollegiate eligibility rule and the first intervarsity matches, the College Union Regatta.²⁷ Likewise, the discovery that seven members of the 1893 University of Michigan football squad were non-students helped precipitate the Presidents' Rules which shortly became the Intercollegiate Conference of Faculty Representatives or Big 10.²⁸

DePauw's University Senate responded to the Michigan scandal by passing a resolution disqualifying "any student . . . enrolled solely for the purpose of engaging in intercollegiate athletics."²⁹ Despite these changes, sports abolitionists won out, at least for a time at DePauw, for at the end of the 1894 season President John sent a terse announcement to the New York *Christian Advocate*: "The faculty of DePauw has discontinued intercollegiate football."³⁰

Boston University, in contrast, had no regulations at all. In easy distance to an array of schools, "our ball teams can reach any point where they care to play and return from it the same day," wrote President W. F. Warren to Quayle, "and as Saturday is the chosen day for such purposes the work of the college is not interfered with." This underlined a strong objection to intervarsity games which the President of Cornell College had noted—playing or traveling on Sundays.³¹

George Reed, the head of Dickinson College in Pennsylvania replied that some of the faculty "oppose the whole thing," but the majority favored a liberal policy toward intercollegiate games. He saw the chief abuse of intercollegiate games as the "absorption of too much time and sometimes other features that are not so pleasant, but on the whole they are to be liberally encouraged." He closed with an insight on Eastern public opinion: "As things go nowadays, it would be a very difficult thing for any institution to take absolute grounds of prohibition, and it is questionable from many points of view whether such a policy would be wise." The not-so-pleasant features Reed left unspecified included the death of a Dickinson sophomore in a football contest with Swarthmore in the 1886 season, and "the spirit of mayhem and mischief" which attended football rivalry on many campuses and caused a period of tight faculty control at Dickinson.³²

Management of the necessary evil was the keynote struck by another Easterner, C. N. Sims, Chancellor of Syracuse University. He wrote to Quayle: "We have the inter-collegiate meetings, I doubt if they are profitable, but I do not know how to avoid them, so we try to supervise them in a manner to do the least harm. Our management of athletics is so far improving that I think they are

27. Smith, *Sports and Freedom*, 177, 30-33.

28. For a list of the "Presidents' Rules," see Williamson and Wild, *Northwestern University*, 91.

29. Sweet, *Indiana Asbury-DePauw University*, 191.

30. *New York Christian Advocate* (December 27, 1894): 849.

31. Warren to Quayle, May 12, 1893, Quayle Files.

32. Reed to Quayle, May 10, 1893, Quayle Files. Charles Coleman Sellers, *Dickinson College: A History* (Middleton: Wesleyan University, 1973), 294-297.

being more useful and less hurtful than before.” Like DePauw University, Syracuse already had regulations in place: “We have a committee of three from our Faculty who co-operate with our athletic societies, arrange their games and inter-collegiate meetings,” Sims wrote.³³

Other replies from colleges of the heartland spoke in general terms about “the evils” of intercollegiate athletics, with an undertone of bowing to public and faculty opinion which seemed to be pushing for more intercollegiate play. Illinois Wesleyan’s president, W. H. Wilder, replied: “I am fully persuaded that the evil in athletics is largely in the intercollegiate games. We have not allowed athletics to take a large place: but they are encouraged to a limited extent by the entire faculty. It may be necessary in the near future to forbid our students going abroad to engage in contest games.” Again danger seemed to be connected with traveling. President J. W. Bashford of Ohio Wesleyan, the school with the largest number of students on a single campus in Methodism, did not mince words: “We do not have intercollegiate games. Have never permitted our students to go away from the college on a physical contest save in one or two instances.”³⁴

The most pro-athletic sentiments came from the Western-most school polled, the University of Denver. Its chancellor, William McDowell, replied that his school’s intervarsity experience so far had been limited, yet “Up to date we have seen no evil results of the practice, and I am rather inclined to think the matter has been favorable.”³⁵

No word appears in these presidents’ letters specifically citing physical injuries or the fear of temptation by alcohol; several letters noted the popularity of the games. All but one of the replies were remarkably general and unforthcoming regarding specific fears, indeed, like the criticism of Trinity in North Carolina reported by Sumner, they “were vague and nebulous, almost generic.” When “evils” were spoken of we may assume they were so generally understood that no specification was felt to be necessary. Hence it was valuable for President King of Cornell College to list some fears. Perhaps injuries were not mentioned because Quayle’s question referred to all intercollegiate games, not just football, although it was the era of great football interest, anything-goes plays, padless jerseys, no helmets, and the rugby ball. Football was beginning to rule varsity sports, replacing baseball as the favored game; basketball had only just been invented. Everyone knew injuries were a part of the game, therefore much probably went without saying.³⁶

Of the six specific problems cited in the responses—admission of professional players, betting, exclusive benefits, time constraints, anti-educational intensity, traveling — the latter was referred to three times. Fear of traveling, one may speculate, encompassed alcohol and sabbath-breaking, since most

33. Sims to Quayle, May 12, 1893, Quayle Files.

34. Wilder to Quayle, May 13, 1893; Bashford to Quayle, May 10, 1893, Quayle Files.

35. McDowell to Quayle, June 5, 1893, Quayle Files.

36. Injuries were duly noted. An eyewitness to the Baker seasons of the early 1890s wrote of the toll of accidents and injuries in both the 1891 and 1892 seasons; M. S. Dudgeon, “History of Athletics,” 25.

games would have to be played on weekends. Another of Quayle's correspondents in the year 1893, not a college president, but a fellow-minister promoting Quayle's university, showed the inescapable connection of prohibition of intercollegiate sports with the prohibition of alcohol in this report:

After service Sabbath evening [in North Lawrence, Ks.] I presented the new catalogues of Baker and made a warm speech recommending Baker University to all young people who wanted an education and especially to Methodist young people. There was a large class of young people there, many of them from the country and I thought I was making a speech that would win some of them. When I closed my remarks I turned the meeting over to Bro. [Alfred P.] Hamilton [the pastor] to make his announcements and dismiss.

He jumped to his feet and said; I want to say a word about Baker University and then proceeded to speak of the Conference resolution against intercollegiate games, and that the faculty have disregarded the conference vote and he considered it REBELLION. Also he said the greatest danger to our national government today is a disregard of law. Anarchy runs riot in our State in contempt for our Prohibitory amendment and the same disposition has crept into the church. . . .³⁷

What was this "REBELLION" of Baker University that Bro. Hamilton decried so vehemently? The Education Committee that dealt with Baker at the Methodist Conference of 1893 which incidentally met at Baldwin, was, in fact, silent about athletics that year. Another committee, however, that on Popular Amusements for the 1893 conference announced: "Resolved, that we, the ministers of the Kansas conference, believing that the practice of inter-collegiate games is detrimental to the best interests of our schools and higher education, respectfully request the trustees and faculties of such schools to do all in their power to discourage such practice."³⁸ This resolution, brought to vote and passed by a large majority in the closing moments of the conference, reflected a powerful speech just made to the conference by Dr. Charles H. Payne, the secretary of the national Methodist Board of Education, regarding the "shameful, disgraceful, and demoralizing influences" of intercollegiate games in the East.³⁹

Baker's "rebellion," during its champion year of 1893 then, was against this committee's resolution "to discourage" the games. Those who felt, as Bro. Hamilton did, that they needed stronger language and authority to either abolish the games or to reasonably accuse Baker of errancy, marshaled forces at the next annual meeting in March, 1894, and enacted stringent measures to control the "rebels." They influenced the Education Committee and Baker's Board of Trustees to go on record:

Upon the question of football, we believe with the executive committee of the

37. J. Boicourt, Tongnoxi, Ks., to Quayle, August 22, 1893, Quayle Files.

38. Popular Amusements Committee report for 1893 in *Kansas Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church Minutes of the Thirty-eighth Session, Held at Baldwin, Kan., March 1-6 1893* (Kansas City, Ks.: Gazette Publishing & Printing Co., 1893), 26.

39. Dr. Payne introduced to 1893 conference, *Kansas Annual Conference . . . March 1-6, 1893*, 11; Payne identified in *Minutes of the Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church Fall Conference of 1893* (New York: Hunt & Eaton), 391. Payne's biography in *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* 4: 159-160. Report of Payne's address to the 1893 Kansas conference, *Baldwin Ledger*, March 10, 1893.

board of trustees, that the physical risk of the participants in the game, as now played, the danger is greater than should be, and that the game should not be permitted hereafter at Baker, unless the rules of the game be so changed and modified as to prevent what is usually called 'mass plays' or 'flying wedges,' wherein most of the serious accidents to members of other clubs have occurred.⁴⁰

This Education Committee report on physical dangers and the Popular Amusements Committee report on moral dangers of football (quoted in the introduction to this article) combined to finish football at Baker until the year 1909. The Public Amusements committee sought to ban not only football, but all intercollegiate sports, demonstrating their dim view of all traveling games. Bro. Hamilton had more to say on this subject: "I knew a rich man who brought his son to Lawrence to attend the Business College who said he would gladly have sent his son to Baker were it not for the Intercollegiate games. He did not want his son exposed to the temptations he would be sure to meet with when visiting other states in the contests . . ."⁴¹

Again appear the dangers of traveling—this time to other states. As a prohibitionist, Bro. Hamilton most likely linked travel to other states with the availability of alcohol in those foreign districts. The Methodists and Baptists of Kansas had helped make that state the first to enact constitutional prohibition when, in the election of 1880, prohibition had passed into law by 8,000 votes. Visits by young Kansas athletes to colleges in other states might expose them to legal alcohol and the different mores and drinking habits of non-Methodist traditions, even as the Trinity football team did when it traveled to Lynchburg, Va. and got in trouble with its keg of beer on the return trip, or when Yale and Princeton played in New York City and afterwards were reported drunk by the press.⁴² Most vexing might have been exposure to certain Christian colleges, such as Catholic or Lutheran ones scattered across the Midwest, in which alcohol was part of religious and social culture reflecting the use of wine by Jesus and the apostles—usage which tee-total pietists perennially labored to explain.

The Position of the Pietistic Christian Advocate

The question of influence of the national Methodist press, particularly the *New York Christian Advocate*, "the leading Methodist Journal in America," and the regional papers such as the St. Louis *Central Advocate* should be noted. Sumner finds in North Carolina that the regional Raleigh *Christian Advocate* reprinted with effect articles critical of football lifted from the New York paper. But it is also true that the *Central Advocate* of the middle region reprinted only a

40. Education Committee report in *Kansas Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Official Minutes of the Thirty-ninth Session, Held at Abilene, Kansas, March 7-12, 1894* (Edwin Locke, Publisher: n.d.), 31-32.

41. J. Boicourt to Quayle, August 22, 1893, Quayle Files.

42. Sumner, "John Franklin Crowell," 16. *Christian Advocate* (December 3, 1891): 826, reprinted stories from the *New York Tribune* and Sun of the post-game drinking of Yale and Princeton students; also see *Christian Advocate* (December 7, 1893): 786.

few stories against football, and reported the conference story of the banning of football at Baker in terms so veiled that only an insider could know.⁴³

As the national voice of Methodist traditional piety, the New York *Christian Advocate* seized on the annual Thanksgiving Day game held in that city, usually Yale vs. Princeton, to decry the violence, drinking, and betting surrounding the modern game. Significant essays appeared on this theme every December in the early 1890s; they usually began with a positive word for the old-fashioned game of football, noted with disdain the present rash of serious injuries, criticized alcohol-influenced behavior surrounding the game, pointed out gambling involved, and shamed the usual top three of the Ivy League.⁴⁴

The writer, probably the paper's long-time editor James Buckley, admitted he played a game called football as a boy: "Then there were no match games nor intercollegiate battles; . . . [no] Permanent teams more honored by the faculties than the best students . . ." The paper deplored that football had become what today we might call a symbol: "Now all the rivalries of colleges, in scholarship, numbers, and fame, are concentrated in this game." He noted that Vassar and Wellesley students "are as much interested as were the women of the Middle Ages in the tournaments, or those of Rome in the gladiatorial shows," attributing romantic and pagan qualities to football. Then the critic listed other modernizing interests—the press which sought "remunerative rivalry," as did railroads, saloons and hotels.

In one sentence the critic caught a society, out of control, in the grasp of sport: "As discipline in colleges is a thing of the past, presidents are timid, and faculties indifferent or incapable of resisting the frenzy, the tide becomes a real mania: the wounded and killed, like the performers in the bull fights of Spain, are borne off the arena, and the crowd calls for more to rush, yell, struggle, and fall. . . ." His paper offered "honor," not to say national validation, to "Any university which will prohibit participation in intercollegiate games by undergraduates . . ."⁴⁵

Next to competition for prestige, the editor saw gambling as "the most powerful single element" fueling the football craze. Most *Advocate* stories linked football to drink, as in the annual Thanksgiving Day game in New York: "The time, Thanksgiving Day. Gambling and drunkenness, and concomitants of the same. . . these are the bright, consummate flower of American youth." It

43. For *Christian Advocate*, see entry for its longtime editor, James Buckley, in the *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* 12: 191-192. *St. Louis Central Christian Advocate* (March 21, 1894): 18, noted "The committee on popular amusements reported; a minority report was read but voted down, and the original report was under discussion when the time for adjournment was reached. [After adjournment] the report on popular amusements was again taken up and after a lengthy and warm discussion adopted."

44. See for instance *Christian Advocate*, December 3, 1891; December 15, 1892; December 7, 1893; December 6, 1894. The paper was not altogether critical of football; it reprinted a long article on November 8, 1894, from the *British Medical Journal* on a study of football by a Dr. Beyer and his "vital index" (lung capacity divided by weight) which gave the game high marks for "developing bodily power . . . the question whether football is the best means of developing the body is another matter."

45. *Christian Advocate* (December 3, 1891): 825-826, (December 6, 1894): 794. The editorialist wrote in the 1891 article: "Football is a stirring game. It was so when the writer played it until he got black in the face . . . from an unexpected collision with the foot of a giant."

reported in lurid terms in 1893 the blood-spattered Yale team returning in defeat to their Fifth Avenue hotel while Princeton players celebrated drunkenly. "[W]hen it is considered that Princeton and Yale were founded by godly men, to promote morals and religion, the travesty of Christianity is too obvious to need comment." And in 1894 he lamented ". . . the institutions most concerned were all founded by pious men and praying women to promote the kingdom of CHRIST!"⁴⁶

The editor juxtaposed "submerging of conscience . . . unreasoning excitements which become epidemic . . . paganizing tendencies" to describe the mass experience of sport in "The Crisis in Football." "[We] must unite and use the visible forces of moral influence and the invisible forces of the spiritual life, of which the chief is prayer, to stem the tide and set free the Church to do its work. . . ."⁴⁷ Sentiments such as these broadcast to Methodist conference voters over a period of years, combined with the agitation of national representatives of the Methodist Episcopal church such as Dr. C. H. Payne of the Board of Education, culminated in votes against football.

The Departure and Return of Quayle

Quayle left Baker in 1894, the year the conference banned football against his wishes, as Crowell left Trinity in the same year. Quayle made a "manly appeal" for continuance of intercollegiate games to the 1893 Conference members, but the anti-sport resolutions were "railroaded through," according to the Baker student paper. On the 1894 vote, the normally tight-lipped *Central Christian Advocate* even called it a "lengthy and warm discussion."⁴⁸

Students favored Quayle and football; "For a time there was restlessness in the student body. The big athletes went to Northwestern," reported the historian of Baker.⁴⁹ An historical article of 1929 differs: the football team went to nearby Ottawa University in the fall of '94 "almost to a man." Perhaps because Baker was so dispirited that fall, no student newspaper appeared until December. The literary magazine, however, mentioned one significant demonstration. When the returning champion team finally realized that there would be no more football at Baker, seven of the team transferred *en masse* from the school on October 10. Students held a mock funeral for football, draped the Baker colors, and marched in procession to the train station to watch the seven ride away to enroll at Ottawa University to play football.⁵⁰

And two outstanding 1893 Baker men went to Colorado in 1894 as coach-players: "Thunderbolt" half-back Harry Heller to the University of Colorado, Boulder, and center Edward Pendleton to the Colorado School of Mines, Golden. Both played for Baker, along with some of the Ottawa exiles, in the one unofficial match game of 1894, the Thanksgiving Day game at Denver when

46. *Christian Advocate* (December 3, 1892): 826; (December 7, 1893): 786; (December 6, 1894): 794.

47. *Christian Advocate* (December 6, 1894): 794.

48. Dudgeon, "History of Athletics," 27; *Central Christian Advocate* (March 21, 1894): 18.

49. Ebright, *The History of Baker University*, 164.

50. *Baker Orange*, November 26, 1929. *Baker University Index*, 15 (October, 1894): 30.

Baker knocked off the Denver Athletic Club 36-6 before nearly 10,000 spectators, many of whom had come from Boulder and Golden to cheer Baker and its two professional players. Few cared that this 1894 Baker team “was not a *bona fide* collection of college talent of any one year” but a partial reunion of the scattered 1893 champions which had beaten the Denver club the Thanksgiving before by 32-0.⁵¹

Though Quayle argued for Baker football, he did not make a major issue of it as Crowell had done in North Carolina. Instead, Quayle accepted a call in late summer, 1894, as pastor of Independence Avenue Church, Kansas City, and never returned to academia. His *wunderkind* reputation at Baker and his platform histrionics had gained notice across the country. He received calls from progressively more influential churches as he pursued his career as minister, platform speaker, literary critic, and nature writer. In 1908 in Baltimore he was elected a Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church. His writings show him to be a romantic “muscular Christian,” as historian Benjamin Rader defined the type: “His spirit found its truest expression in the out-of-doors, in the refreshing vigor of the countryside, and on the athletic field.”⁵²

Quayle wrote “The strong man’s vocation is what preaching is. . . . The football men are the men wanted here. The center-rush men who heed not the opposing line, how hard it is to break, but break it—such men are the preacher type. I would have every candidate for the ministry play football. It would teach him impact and to see with quick eye the need, and with spirit and body agility to cope with the need.”⁵³ When Baker reinstated football in 1909, the Bishop visited the campus and made an impromptu speech, suggesting that “the danger in co-educational institutions is that they shall become womens’ colleges,” citing a trend of gender imbalance in “a great many institutions.” Football would attract more men, men would attract more women, and the colleges would flourish. Students cheered.⁵⁴

The president who followed Quayle at the end of 1894, L. H. Murlin, was also the president who saw the reinstatement of football 15 years later. In December, 1908, competition for students and changing attitudes led him to present a reinstatement plan to the trustees in which he assessed the costs to Baker of football’s abolition: “Fourteen years ago last June you abolished football from the athletic activities of our student body. Say what you will, it killed all college spirit and only the most heroic effort kept our enrollment up

51. Denver *Western Athletics* 2 (November, 1894): 3-4; (December, 1894): 3-4.

52. Quayle’s early reputation is reported in St. Louis *Central Christian Advocate* (March 8, 1893): 8; “President Quayle . . . not yet thirty-five gifted with picturesque and dramatic power on the platform and in the pulpit, a skilful teacher and administrator noble specimen fine record.” This article notes the attendance increase at Baker during his four-year tenure. One of his most popular books, *The Prairie and the Sea* was reviewed favorably in *The Dial, Outlook*, and the *New York Times* which commented (February 17, 1906) that it had “the appeal of contagion.” Quayle’s *Recovered Yesterdays in Literature* (1916) is still in print. Quayle also pastored large churches in Indianapolis and Chicago; his bishopric residences were Oklahoma City, St. Paul, and St. Louis. Quayle was a bibliophile who left a notable collection of rare manuscript and early printed Bibles to Baker University. Benjamin Rader, *American Sports* (1983 ed.), 151.

53. Quayle, *The Pastor-Preacher* (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1910), 12.

54. Undated typescript “Remarks of Bishop Quayle on Reinstating of Football,” (c. 1909) with audience responses, Football Files.

. . . there was a decrease of 46 the next year . . .”⁵⁵ Now that local high schools were widely available, Baker depended almost solely on its collegiate program. Competing with more permissive area colleges who also had proud football traditions was tough, Murlin argued, and the reinstatement of football would help—not only in recruiting students, but also in improving morale in the school.

In the 1890s, the first full decade of the football craze, pietists objected to intercollegiate athletics because of drinking and gambling which surrounded it, because it was a dissipation which wasted rather than “redeemed the time,” and because games took place or required travel on Sunday. Some voiced secular concerns with eligibility problems. They viewed its brutality and violence as de-civilizing and counter to Christian peace, and physical injuries as dangerous to young manhood which the colleges were supposed to nurture. The founders of colonial colleges and 19th century pietists display a continuity of moral tradition connecting the Congregationalist founders of Harvard and Yale, for instance, to the 19th century frontier religions of the Baptists and Methodists.

The democratically controlled conference committees in the Methodist Conferences of 1893 and 1894, both in Kansas and in North Carolina, thought they had the answer to the moral problems of “the hot competition in these games”—abolish such sports. A national Methodist press publicized arguments linking intercollegiate football with alcohol, betting, “paganizing” violence, and sabbath-breaking. Injuries provided a plausible reason to abolish football which the pietists exploited. Football seemed a ready-made symbol of barbarism, and with a little help from the pietist imagination became a symbol of moral evil so that democratically-run Methodist conferences began to abolish intercollegiate sports, despite the modernizing trend to make a positive symbol of football.

The pietist critique was a rearguard action against the secularizing, mass society with a “new sports ideology” and its component, “muscular Christianity.” These critics warned of dire consequences if football were not abolished, and they were proved right in the grave football crises of later years. In 1905-1906 dramatic football deaths and injuries led to the formation of what became the NCAA, while President Theodore Roosevelt tried to tame the game with a White House conference of the Big Three college teams—Princeton, Harvard, and Yale.⁵⁶ Stanford, California, New York University, Union, and Northwestern dropped football then, as Baker and Trinity had done a decade earlier.

55. Another source shows a total loss in all departments of 58 between 1894 and 1895; Ebright, *History of Baker University*, 353. A student in the 1894-95 year wrote “This has been a dry year . . . There have been no bonfires, no class ‘scraps,’ no burial of the [K.U.] crimson. Our spirits were crushed at the very beginning of the year. We had a notion to go to DePauw where there are no fogies (Later: The fogies have reached DePauw now.)” in *Baker University Index* 15 (February, 1895): 85-86. Murlin, “Extract from President Murlin’s Report to the Board of Trustees, Dec. 1908,” 9-page typescript in Football Files. Murlin’s plea for football revealed a face of college pietism in 1908: Baker students in the small town of Baldwin were expected to refrain from dancing, going to the theatre, movies, and the skating rink, and were forbidden to play cards.

56. A common figure reported of the 1905-06 season is 18 deaths and 149 serious injuries from football, George H. Sage, *Power and Ideology in American Sport* (Champaign, IL.: Human Kinetics, 1990), 172. Smith, *Sports and Freedom*, 194-206.