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Cynthia Bava Spiro

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TIGERS, TRADITIONS AND TEAMS:
FOOTBALL AND ITS INFLUENCE ON SCHOOL CUSTOMS
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC

by Cynthia Bava Spiro

The University of the Pacific tiger mascot has been a symbol of the school's athletic teams for over 80 years. Although the actual rendition of the tiger emblem has changed from the graphic drawing of a ferocious, roaring tiger in its earliest beginnings to the "Tommy Tiger" caricature used today, Pacific students, alumni, and boosters identify their school with this animal symbol and the colors orange and black.

How did the Tiger come to be Pacific's mascot? To answer this question involves a study of the evolution of the school colors, student rituals and traditions, and how football played a major role in all.

SCHOOL COLORS

When the University of the Pacific students published the inaugural issue of their college annual in 1886, editors chose the word "Naranjado" as its title, which is the Spanish translation of orange, the college color.

Why orange was chosen as Pacific's color is not specifically stated in any of the early college documents. However, one might take several facts and suggest a theory which has much credence:

- * Pacific was the first chartered university in California, whose official state flower is the Golden Poppy
- * Golden poppies blanketed the pristine Coastal Range mountains which surrounded the Santa Clara valley at the time Pacific was established there in 1851.
- * Poppies graced the cover of the 1890 Naranjado and adorned the pages of other early student publications
- * The California Golden Poppy was chosen as the official school flower in the 1925 College of Pacific Associated Students Constitution and By-Laws.

Given these facts, a strong theory might suggest that the school color was chosen to reflect the California Golden Poppy. The earliest artifact from the University, the Meet Director's ribbon from the 1886 Field Day, is actually a golden orange, not the bright color that is used today.

Sporting activities and teams were the primary vehicles to proudly display the school colors in the college's early years. Pacific's school color was first mentioned in an 1866 article from the San Jose Mercury, in which the University's base ball team was described as wearing uniforms graced with "orange, the college color", on an olive green background. Why black became a background color for the orange is never mentioned, yet the first reference to this color was in the 1888 Pacific Pharos, which describe the Class of '90's Field Day team as "handsomely arranged in black". An 1897 San Jose Mercury article on the University's Cycling Club described their "orange sweaters trimmed in black and having the emblem of the club in black upon the orange", while a 1903 Pacific Pharos article about a football game reported that "...our rooters again cheered the orange and black to victory." The 1905 Pacific Student Body Constitution only designates orange as the college color, yet in 1909 there were several yells and songs cheering on the "Orange and Black", and references to these two colors continued in student papers when describing the athletic teams. It was not until 1925 that the Associated Students of the College of Pacific (ASCOP) Constitution officially designated black as the second college color.

THE LEGEND OF THE PRINCETON CONNECTION

A 1982 publication entitled What's In A Nickname? Exploring the Jungle of College Athletic Mascots gives credit to Princeton University as the origin of the Pacific Tiger mascot. It further quotes, "As a matter of fact, many of the charters, constitutions and other academic framework first used at UOP were modeled after those of Princeton." It theorizes that since both institutions are similar in both philosophy and size, as well as colors and names which begin with "P", that Pacific followed suit and modeled its mascot after the Princeton Tiger. Although this legend has been around Pacific for many years, there is no proof to support any of these theories.

Pacific, the first chartered university in California, was established in 1851 by ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

It was one of several West Coast colleges established by the Church to further Christian educational values in a state populated by people who came "... on a wild search for material wealth, placing an obstacle in the way of educational advancement..." (California Christian Advocate, Feb. 22, 1912)

In no early documents do Pacific's founding fathers refer to Princeton University. There was only one reference to Princeton in the early student newspaper exchanges, printed in the Pharos, and the item had no bearing on this discussion.

WHAT IS A TIGER?

As for the Tiger as a college mascot, there is a bit of a story here.

The Tiger as a mascot, according to the "Nickname" book, is the second most popular collegiate mascot in the country (second to Eagle). "Tiger" not only means the sleek and graceful animal which graces our college paraphernalia; "Tiger" is also a unique American slang word which means "a shriek or howl given at the end of three rounds of enthusiastic cheering: whence the phrase 'three cheers and a Tiger'" (Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, 2nd Ed. 1952)

Historians have researched this term back to the 1820's, and gives credit to the Boston Light Infantry, dubbed the "Tigers" because of their unique battle cry. As they marched into New York in 1826, "at a public festival awoke the echoes.... by giving a genuine howl. Gradually it became adopted on all festive and joyous occasions, and now "three cheers and a tiger" are inseparable demonstrations of approbation in New York" (Bartlett American Dictionary, 1859)

The Seventh Regiment of New York, a Civil War regiment, modified the Boston cheer, and created: "Rah, Rah, Rah! Tiger, Tiger, Tiger! Sis, Boom, Bah!", punctuated by shrieking and howling at the end of the chant. Princeton University students picked this cheer up as the regiment marched through in the early 1860's, and adopted it for its own. It was probably this cheer that Princeton used in introducing organized spectator cheering at the first American football game versus Rutgers in 1869.

As college football teams organized in the late 1800's, students copied the Princeton type of cheering as part of

the spectacle. The popular "Three cheers and a Tiger" to voice college spirit and show support of the school team led to way to the adaptation of Tiger mascots at many American colleges.

In the 1880's, the Princeton football players introduced black jerseys with orange stripes. The "Tiger" cheer and the uniforms probably evolved into the Princeton tiger mascot, which quickly became well-known throughout the country.

THE TIGERS OF PACIFIC

Nicknames for American college athletic teams began as early as the 1860's. When University of Pacific played Santa Clara College in baseball in 1866, the San Jose Mercury called the team "the Universities", since UOP was California's first chartered university among several state colleges. This nickname was used frequently in both the local newspaper and in Pacific student publications throughout the late 1800's. Occasionally another name would surface, such as "Dirigo" (?) in 1885, but it was short-lived.

"Tiger" was first used in the fall of 1908, when rugby replaced football at Pacific. The nickname evolved because the uniform jerseys and socks were black with orange stripes, making the team look like tigers. The Pacific Pharos reported, "New suits have been ordered and when the team appears in action they will wear the "Tiger" stripes, which will be of great assistance to the players because they can locate their own men without any difficulty." The students expressed hope that the "tiger" moniker would inspire the team to play with the same intensity and fierceness as the jungle cat.(1908)

Not only was "Tiger" used to describe the team, but the student body embraced this animal persona as its own identity. The Tiger, a student publication, was first published in November, 1908. Within its pages, the student writers used tiger metaphors and pictures to describe campus events and express opinions. The editor of The Tiger, 14-letterwinner James Trevarrow, used the pseudonym "Tige", and extolled the students to "Keep on the Sunny Side" all the while proclaiming the "Tige is proud of the Tiger team". The following year (1909), a handbook was published entitled "Songs and Yells from the Tiger's Den", containing a variety of songs and yells cheering for the "Tiger" team and the "Orange and Black" of old Pacific.

Although the 1912 Student Body Constitution and By-Laws did not designate "Tiger" as an official mascot, by 1914 the term was used in both student and local newspapers to describe all of Pacific's athletic teams. "Tiger" was finally made the official college mascot in the 1925 ASCOP Constitution.

"THREE CHEERS AND A TIGER FOR OLD U.P.!"

The first spectator cheering occurred at the first American football game, played in 1869 by Princeton and Rutgers. At the beginning of the game, the yelling was done by the players themselves, until they found they were out of breath and were unable to play intensely. The spectators were then asked to give the yells, thus starting the United States custom of organized sideline yelling at athletic contests. By the late 1800's, this custom was picked up by other colleges throughout the nation through student newspaper exchanges.

At Pacific, students wrote in the 1885 Hatchet:

"The majority of Eastern institutions have a college yell in which students are wont to expand their lungs in the event of any victory. In all inter-collegiate contests the victors manifest their enthusiasm by shrieking the triumphant 'yell' of their alma-mater. Why can not we have an U.P. yell -- something magnetic and catchy which will inspire students to further achievements?"

The students answered the challenge, and wrote this less-than-inspiring yell for the November 1885 Epoch:

" Hic! Hic! Hic! Pa-Ci-Fic! Ah-h-h!

In 1897, the football team was given support by the Pacific student body in the first organized rally to "create enthusiasm", held during weekly chapel services. University President Dr. McLish lent his cane "cut from the battleship Hartford" as a baton to lead the cheering. "This is the first time in the University that cheering has been under a leader, and however effective yelling may have been under the old method the new way doubled its efficiency yesterday." (San Jose Daily Mercury, Oct.. 17, 1897)

A Rooters Club was organized in 1902, lending support at the football games under the leadership of a designated yell leader.

In the first Constitution and By-Laws of the Student Body, written in February 1905, the University of the Pacific college yell was officially designated:

"U of P Urah!
U of P Urah!
U of P Urah!
Hoorah! Hoorah!
Pacific, Rah!

In the 1907 revision of the Student Body Constitution and By-Laws, the official college yell was changed:

"Boom-chick-boom!
Boom-chick-boom!
Boom-jiga-riga-jiga-riga-jiga-boom!
Rah! - Rah!
Sis-Boom-Ah!
Pacific! Pacific!
Rah! Rah! Rah!

In 1909 an official song and yell booklet was published, beginning a series of student spirit activities and printed materials which served to unite the students into one voice, both at football contests and on institutional matters.

By 1925, more than twenty yells and songs had been composed and were featured in the college student handbook so students could properly cheer for Pacific at the football games.

EARLY AMERICAN FOOTBALL AND ITS EFFECT AT PACIFIC

The catalyst for much of this spirited student body cohesiveness was the college football team.

American football in its infancy did not resemble the game we know today. Before the influence of rugby at the turn of the century, football was mainly a soccer-style sport whereby the ball was advanced by kicking it. It also evolved into a brutally physical sport with mass formations which maimed and even killed participants.

Even with its condemnation by early physical educators and college administrators, football emerged as a popular sport among college students throughout the country. A.A. Stagg, the "Grand Old Man of Football", firmly believed

that the abiding popularity of football was a result of it being the only American game developed solely in the colleges, therefore becoming permanently connected with college life and tradition. Stagg's view was that football required far more emotional intensity to both play and watch than any other sport, thus it was embraced with equal enthusiasm by players, students and alumni.

This premise is reflected in the evolution of football at the University of the Pacific.

The exact beginnings of football at Pacific are vague, although an article in the 1885 Hatchet, in emphasizing the importance of sports on campus, stated: "There is a great reaction in favor of the time-honored game of football, in which, during former years, the University won many well-earned victories. Let everyone come to the front and revive an interest in a preeminently college game." (p.117)

The students organized the University Foot-Ball Club that following year (1886), but this team was short-lived.

By 1894, football was again being played at Pacific, this time with more organization and school support. In 1896 the University secured the services of F.C. Smith, "a disciple of the famous Stagg and a most competent man", to coach and play quarterback. (San Jose Daily Mercury, January 15, 1896, p.3). The school team became more ambitious, scheduling contests against neighboring colleges and holding daily practices. In 1896 the faculty adapted rules for athletic eligibility, and in 1897 a training table was established at the boarding house to feed the team members. That same year the school held the first rally to promote student enthusiasm for the football team, a significant show of school unity during a dark time of student unrest and financial insecurity for the institution.

The early teams were not without controversy. In 1897 one team member was discovered "intoxicated" after a game, and was kicked out of school. The next game against Watsonville was followed up by an evangelistic revival in the Watsonville Methodist Church, possibly an attempt to squelch any further behavior problems!

Athletic competition between neighboring schools developed rapidly at the turn of the century. The "Pacific Academic League" was established between six local high schools and the UP Academy, which was the college prep school administered by the University. The newly-organized student body (1899) became a spirited force in

establishing athletics as an integral part of the collegiate experience. They administered the Athletic Association, which managed all sports, and financially supported athletic contests with fund-raising entertainments and student body fees. The students participating in football had to contribute \$20 each for uniforms, although the remaining costs were sometimes picked up by the UP Alumni Association, an active organization which was established in 1873.

By 1902, essays were prevalent in the Pacific Pharos extolling the virtues of football working hand in hand with the intellectual development of the student, as well as providing a much-needed vehicle to generate college spirit and enthusiasm among students. The college social activities revolved around the athletic contests, and prestige was extolled upon those skilled students who participated on the gridiron. "U.P. athletics are awakening from a lethargy in which they have long lain, a lethargy that has done much to hurt the good name and past record of the institution." (Pacific Pharos, Dec. 1902)

The 1905 Pacific football team was the most successful team thus far, with a 3-1 record, outscoring opponents 101-16, and achieving a financial success "never before known in the history of U.P. athletics." (Pacific Pharos, May, 1905)

RUGBY ARRIVES AT PACIFIC

Unfortunately, that same year there also occurred a national controversy which significantly affected Pacific and other colleges.

In 1905, there were 19 deaths and 200 injuries from college football games nationwide, prompting an investigation by President Roosevelt and the establishment of the NCAA to regulate football. Many institutions decided to drop the sport in favor of rugby because of unfavorable public opinion. That same year, a student participating in the annual football contest between San Jose and Santa Clara high schools was killed when his skull was crushed in a pile-up of players. Football was immediately suspended by all schools in the Santa Clara valley, with Stanford and California dropping football in favor of rugby in 1906. Pacific followed suit, suspending all football in 1906, and a major debate among students and faculty occurred whether to continue football or begin rugby in the fall of 1907.

The male students wanted to keep football, since the game and its accompanying social activities were firmly

established, and nobody knew the rudiments of rugby. However, it became apparent that UOP could not schedule any football games with neighboring schools (they had all initiated rugby in place of football), and that there was the question of the effect of the public opinion against football would have on U.P.'s enrollment if they continued to play the game. When a San Francisco rugby player was injured, becoming available as a resident coach for Pacific, a rugby team was formed under his direction for the remainder of the 1907 fall season.

Rugby was officially established in the fall of 1908, with a hired coach, striped uniforms (hence the nickname, "Tigers"), and a schedule of games including Stanford, California, San Jose and Santa Clara high schools, and the San Francisco Barbarian Rugby Club. The sport became the focus of much social activity, and its players were highly regarded on campus.

Rugby played an important role at Pacific. The game was a key element in the creation of the school mascot, the hiring of professional coaches at Pacific, and the scheduling of prestigious college competition, including contests with USC and St. Mary's. The fact that Pacific had a rugby team was featured in the college catalog, and eventually college physical education credits were given to those students involved in athletic activities. A Block P letter society was suggested by students in 1909 so that "...every honor bestowed on the wearers of the 'Block P' will add to the interest and success of athletics in Our School. It could meet once a year for a big banquet...it would be The Big Event in Pacific's social world every year and it would bind the athletes together with stronger ties." (The Tiger, March 4, 1909, p. 8) Rugby was enthusiastically followed by both students and local supporters, and even produced Pacific's first nationally-renowned athlete -- Dick Wright, class of '19, was selected on an All-American team to play an All-British team, and was named the best Rugby fullback in America in 1916. In 1917, rugby was discontinued because of a lack of competition due to World War I, thus ending a unique period in UOP sports history.

PACIFIC FOOTBALL IN THE MODERN ERA

In 1919 modern American football was reinstated at Pacific, beginning an unbroken string of 73 competitive seasons. Through the years, Pacific football has enjoyed numerous successes, both locally and nationally. The hiring of the famous football coach Amos Alonzo Stagg in 1933 brought an infusion of talented athletes,

competitions with major opponents, and national attention to the tiny campus. The undefeated 1949 team, led by 19-year old whiz Eddie LeBaron, captured the hearts of fans across America. In the 1950's, 36 Pacific players were chosen in the professional football draft, more than in any time of Pacific football history, with 12 of them establishing substantial NFL careers.

The heydays of the '30's, '40's and '50's were followed by an institutional de-emphasis in the '60's, a resurgence in the '70's, and competitive difficulties interspersed with key successes in the '80's. Throughout the decades, football's rich heritage and role in collegiate life has allowed the game to endure at Pacific.

Football today continues to play a major part of such current campus traditions as Homecoming, Parents Day, and Greek festivities. The game has again brought national attention to Stockton, through the record-breaking accomplishments of its talented scholar-athletes.

A PERSONAL OBSERVATION

The famous American football coach Lynn "Pappy" Waldorf once stated that "A football team at any given institution tends to become...a symbol of that institution." He continued his essay to conclude: "a football team ...may serve as an equally vicarious interest and outlet for the entire student body." (Waldorf, 1952, p. 253)

Waldorf's opinion has a ring of truth at Pacific, where football, both the American and English version, has had a substantial effect on the evolution of many traditions inherently woven into the fabric of Pacific's heritage. The Tiger mascot is symbolic of Pacific loyalty and pride, the Block P a proud emblem of physical sacrifice and achievement, and the annual gridiron contests provides the theater to showcase the college colors, songs, yells, and other rituals which remind both students and alumni of their love for Pacific.

One often-overlooked but extremely important element in this entire discussion is the effect of football on the athlete himself, and what his experience adds to an institution, both while on campus and later in the professional arena. In 1904, Pacific students wrote:

"In all the prosperous colleges of today we find that special attention is given to athletics in its various branches of activity. Man is so constituted that he cannot develop his mental talents at the neglect of his physical nature without paying a priceless indemnity. May God

hasten the day when we shall give athletics her rightful place side by side with our intellectual ideals, for then, and not till then, will our institution command proper respect and commendation." (Pacific Pharos, March 1904, p. 127)

The students' vision of coupling physical and intellectual development is alive today at the University of the Pacific, where academic excellence has combined with quality athletic experiences to create the optimum learning environment for the leaders of tomorrow. The long list of prestigious alumni who mastered their leadership skills on the Pacific gridiron is virtually a "who's who" in American business, politics, and education. Football has facilitated the integration of different races and classes of students on the campus throughout its modern era, bringing people together from different backgrounds to work with and learn from one another. The football scholar-athlete, a joke at some of the major college football factories, is a respected and vital part of Pacific's campus life today, and serves as a reachable role model for youth in the Stockton community.

For most of its 123 years of existence, football has been a source of controversy and criticism on college campuses across the nation. This is especially true at the University of the Pacific. Yet, the game has also given so much to Pacific and its family of students, faculty, alumni, and supporters. From the rousing "Come On You Hungry Tigers" at the beginning, to the "Pacific, Hail!" at the end, the football game inspires in many a strong feeling of Pacific pride and loyalty, fueled by memories of people met and events which occurred during this significant period of time in a person's life. It is no wonder that football, begun simply as a recreation club by 11 enthusiastic students, has had such a profound effect on the legacy of traditions and spirit at the University of the Pacific for 100 years.

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"The historian ... is apt to forget that sport in some form or other is the main object of most lives, that most men work in order to play, and that games which bulk so largely in the life of the individual cannot be neglected in studying the life of the nation."

-- Arnold Lunn, as quoted in
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