

The 1955 trojan *Alumni* PRINTS

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Issue 6

48 Year Reunion Of The 1953 PHS Trojan Undefeated Football Team

The 48 year reunion of the coaches, players, and managers of our 1953 undefeated team was held at the home of Don and Lois Wallace in Hide A Way Hills, Ohio Saturday June 23.

As the guests arrived they were greeted by a huge 20 ft sign saying WELCOME 1953 UNDEFEATED PORTSMOUTH TROJANS. A social gathering was held 2 hours before the buffet luncheon.

Tribute was given to the following 12 deceased members. Head Coach Bob Brownson, Players LeRoy Carr, Wallace Cobb, Bill Compton, Mick Grooms, Don Hays, Dick Purpura, Bill Spinks, Jerry Sturgill, Larry Sunafrank, Managers Bill Boyd and Bill Trone. The tribute consisted of 12 white balloons each with the members name and playing number. As each name was read by Don Wallace with a shrill tap on a goblet by Nancy Parker (Harry), a single helium filled balloon was released by Lois Wallace with that person's name on it. Then a grace was given by Lois.

The afternoon was filled with door prizes and many memories. Each and every team member attending told what he has been doing, where they live and related stories about each other during the football year of 1953. There were many very emotional moments.

A surprise Happy Birthday was sung to Coach Earl (Smoky) Gibson celebrating his 80th birthday. Smoky was also a member of the 1938 undefeated Portsmouth Trojans football team. Chester Corbitt had VCR Tapes made of some of the old football films which were available to the guests. A cake depicting a football field with goal posts, players and yard lines was made and donated by

Nancy Parker for the occasion.

A scrap book kept by Line Coach Bruce Schmidt for all these years was given to Don Wallace. When the evening wound down, there were many hand shakes, hugs and goodbyes.

Later that evening another dinner get together was held in Lancaster at Billy Crickets with the players and their wives that were spending the night at the Best Western.

Attendees included: End Coach Earl Gibson and Back Coach Ed Zoretic both from Columbus, Ohio, Line Coach Bruce Schmidt of Malvern, Ohio; Larry Boren, Bob Cook, Gary Goodman, Bruce Johnson, Gib Lawson, Preston Smith, Phillip White all from Portsmouth, Leo Brown Denver Colorado, Michael Brown from Erie PA, Napoleon Brown Akron OH, Spencer Calloway Trotwood OH, Chester Corbitt Columbus OH, Nick Donley Mesa AZ, Jim Gardner, Charlotte NC, Curt Gentry Round Lake Beach IL, Bill Hart Canton OH, Doug Holling Evergreen CO, Clayton Howerton Chillicothe OH, Charlie Jett Payson AZ, Wilson Jones Fairfield OH, Jim Lindeman Virginia Beach VA, Bill Meade Owensboro KY, Ray Mitchell Chillicothe OH, Bob Otworth New Smyrna Beach FL, Harry Parker Franklin OH, Jerry Pitcher Westland MI, Tony Price Smithfield TN, Dave Wagner Greenville SC, Walt Wallace Springboro OH, Don Whitaker Virginia Beach VA, Don Wallace Hide A Way Hills, OH. The player coming the longest distance was Nick Donley from Mesa, Arizona. He was presented with a 2001 Road Atlas and maps to get him back home.

How Good Were We?

Our team played division one and was rated 2nd in Ohio behind Massillon, both of which were undefeated and had impressive records. I'm not sure what the stats for Massillon were, but we played nine games scoring 342 points and allowing 42 points (beating opponents by an average of 33+ points), beat Hamilton 39-7, Middletown 18-14, and Springfield 31-6, averaged more than 10 yards per play. Leroy Carr was selected Ohio Back of the Year and Bob Brownson Ohio Coach of the Year. The team had a number of All-Ohio selections. Massillon had equally impressive stats and many All-Ohio selections too. The teams did not meet and since there were no playoffs, the ranking of teams was decided by the votes of sports writers and coaches. Massillon was a football dynasty, having been ranked No. 1 the previous five years. The two teams had no common opponent, so there was no direct way of comparing them. There were some indirect comparative scores, and depending on which you used, one could argue that either Massillon or Portsmouth was the better team. The most direct set of comparative scores favored Portsmouth. Massillon defeated Warren 28-7, Hamilton defeated Warren 19-0, Portsmouth defeated Hamilton 39-7. Two Portsmouth players went on to play professionally, Curt Gentry for Chicago and Jim Gardner for Cleveland. Leo Brown started three years for The Ohio State Buckeyes and played on three Rose Bowl teams. His senior year he was captain of the Ohio State team. Ara Parseghian, coach at Miami University (of Ohio) at that time, said that Miami scouts considered us not only the best high school team they had seen that year, but the best team they had seen in the last five years.

Don Wallace



The following attendees are missing from this picture: Bob Cook, Bill Hart, Bruce Johnson, Wilson Jones, Ray Mitchell, and Dave Wagner. Those whom I can identify in the picture are Napoleon Brown, Mike Brown, Tony Price, Don Wallace, Bruce Schmidt, Preston Smith, Clayton Howerton, Earl Gibson, Jerry Pitcher, Ed Zoretic, Gary Goodman, Bob Otworth, Gib Lawson, Chet Corbitt, Charlie Jett, Nick Donley, Phil White, Harry Parker, Doug Holling, Walt Wallace, Don Whitaker, Curt Gentry, Jim Gardner, Bill Meade, Larry Boren, Jim Lindeman, Leo Brown, and Spencer Calloway. More pictures are on the back page.

Jim Kegley's Mound Park

I was in Daytona Beach, Florida last week, and had the opportunity to spend an evening with another McConnell Avenue denizen, Jim Zeisler, and his wife, Betty, nee Willis. Jim grew up just up the street at 1307, with his parents, Howard and Virginia, and sisters, Pidge and Jan.

Jim and Betty have been really lucky, Jim retired from the Columbus, Ohio fire department over 11-years ago, and they bought Betty's parents house in South Daytona, and moved. They have two children, Andy, now in Oxford, Ohio working at Miami University, and Carolyn, who is a lady Ohio State Patrolman, at the Chillicothe Post. Jim has become something of an antique clock expert, buying, repairing and collecting old clocks, and he has developed his Herman Klitch taught skills at tennis to the point of becoming a U. S. T. A., official, who works major amateur and pro tennis tournaments in Florida and Georgia. Jim and Betty are 1959 graduates of Portsmouth High School.

On Monday, July 23, I was at the K of C's weekly cheeseburger bash, and Fred Houston, another old Mound Park, Park Shoppe friend, now a retired U. S. Air Force Colonel, stopped in to visit. Fred now lives in Northern Virginia, with his wife, Marilyn, nee Johnson, who is also from Portsmouth.

Fred's the guy who walked-on to the Ohio University basketball team, and made the team, even though, he never played high school basketball at PHS. I can remember Fred and Joe Ray Phelps coming home from OU, and talking about this wonderful food, called pizza pie. I just couldn't imagine a pie that wasn't fruit, and when they said it had tomato sauce, I was sure I would not like it.

Was I ever wrong. I love pizza, and one of the best I ever tasted was the first dime slice I bought at Darone's on Chillicothe Street, way back. I'm just happy that marijuana was not an item when I grew up. I never tried the stuff. But, the way I used to suck on those Lucky Strikes, I probably would have, had it been available.

Jim Zeisler, Fred Houston and I agree that we were indeed lucky to have grown up in close proximity to Mound Park. We'd go from daylight till dark playing marbles, horseshoes, tennis, baseball, corkball, football, softball or mumble peg. Some days we'd just catch June Bugs. Some days we'd watch the old men as they'd whittle the day away, telling war stories and smoking. Life was good!



Guess Who

A couple of pretty girls at Coney Island around 1954 or 1955.

Barbara Cunningham & Jenny Lynn



A Group of Our Just Graduated Girls at a Party

Front Row, Left to Right: Lou Ann Kerr, Donna McCally, Nancy Bower, Mary Gail Drake, Deanie Harrison, Back Row, Left to Right: Shirley McCulloch, Marth Fitch, Sharon Queen, Sharon Chiles, Ginny Belle Smith, Janet Coriell. Carol Merb was supposed to be here, but married Roy instead.



Front Row, Left to Right: Hubert Reynolds, John Lee, ?, Bill Clifford.
Back Row, Left to Right: Howard McCoy, ?, Phil White, Opal Stetzing?, ?, Tom Bond, ?.



Patty Conklin sends this picture of the Central Baptist Sunday School class circa 1945. In it she remembers Anita Apel, Janet Morrow, Katie Davis, Norma ? and Bob Boorman.

MORE MUSICAL TRIVIA

Chuck Berry, R & B superstar and, arguably, the biggest influence in pre-Beatles rock, took a country song entitled "Ida Red" performed in R&B style and reworked and retitled it in 1955. It became a number one hit in that same year. What was the song?

(Maybelline)

Do you remember dancing in freshman and sophomore physical education classes when Coach Dick Hopkins and girl's P. E. teacher Ruth Ann Peake combined their classes? One song they played over and over was by the Mills Brothers, a durable group that had been around since the 1920s. It was recorded in 1952.

(The Glow-Worm)



Name This Group from PHS

Gene Williams sent this:

After reading the latest Alumni Prints, I thought I would send you a picture of this group. The guy in front is Jim Middlecamp who I worked with at Youngstown Sheet and Tube in East Chicago, Indiana until I was laid off and went to work at Ford Motor Company in Chicago Heights, Illinois. I was there for ten years then moved back to Portsmouth. I am retired from the State of Ohio and now live in Jacksonville, Florida. My address is 3335 University Blvd., N. #413, Jacksonville, FL 32277. Phone 904-745-8376.

Back to the picture: The last I heard, Jim Middlecamp was in Englewood, Florida. Left to Right: Bud Stockham, Tom "Flip" Phillips, Bob Destocki, Mike Cranston and in the front, Jim Middlecamp. If you haven't guessed the name by now, it was the "Ivy Leaguers". I believe they were stopped from using the "Ivy" in the name and went to "IV".

John Pendleton

Word of my demise has been greatly exaggerated. I assure you I am alive and almost well living in Clearwater, Florida. It seems like yesterday that I was going to Comptons restaurant across from Grant School and dancing to the ballads of the day. Then on to high school and along came Rock & Roll. WOW! Hard to believe that I was even alive back then.

In grade school, Jerry Warren, Larry Boren and I were best friends. In high school I got with Eddie Hager and Corky sparks. Eddie went to the Navy at 17, Corky finished high school and I went to hell. Oh well. That's another story.

I joined the Army when I was 21 and spent three wonderful years Seeing the world (Ha, they sent me to Fort Campbell Ky and taught me to jump out of airplanes) 101st Airborne Div.

I have a daughter in Portsmouth (Robin Hammond) a grandson (Jonathon) and Robins husband Chad. He coached at PHS-football just recently. He is now coaching and teaching at Northwest. We have three other children in and around Maryville, Tennessee and eight grandchildren.

In grade school at Grant I remember almost all of the football team (8th grade). Jerry Warren, Bill Meade, Charley Jett, Larry Boren, Bill Compton, Nick Donelley, Bill Ramsey (He was shaving in the 8th grade), Wayne Diener, two brothers whose names escape me. For those I missed, my apologies.

My e-mail address is HYPERLINK mail to: jwp4402@aol.com. *John Pendleton*



Cowboys and Indians

Robert Learned Hand (Young) writes:

Just back from exhibit, guest lecture at Royal Academy in London. Foods bad, people bad, hoof and mouth disease, mad cow disease – and they can keep the place!

Don't know why anyone would want to get in touch with me from PHS – but since I can't find a good used transmission for my space ship – have sold the harness, trace chains, and bits for the mules and can now be found on line. nite-horse7@aol.com.

Never thought I'd join the 20th century, but since my wife Melissa died, have had to leap into the 21st! Keep a good thought, always.

His resume states: Born on an Indian Reservation in Anadarko, Oklahoma, of mixed Irish/Comanche heritage, Robert Learned Hand has learned to live in two worlds. Part of each year finds him riding the "High Country" seeking out older Indians. He teaches Indian youths to be proud of their Indian heritage as he, himself, was taught by his Comanche grandfather.

Learned Hand's Comanche grandfather installed within him a love for horses – "The Great Spirits" gift of "Flight Without Wings". This enabled him to compete on the rodeo circuit where he was twice National Champion and once won the coveted Silver Saddle at Cheyenne.

His Irish grandfather took him to museums and introduced him to the art of Remington and Russell. He had no other desire than to be an artist. The money earned on the rodeo circuit enabled him to attend art schools in Mexico, Florida and New York City.



Nancy Witten sent these. You figure out who they are. Answers in next issue.



Tom Stone, Phyllis Schweinsberg and Deanie Harrison at Grant Grade School.



Miss Olsen

We both attended Woodrow Wilson Elementary School in Portsmouth from 1943 to 1951. In fact, we were in the same homeroom for all eight years of elementary school.

Via e-mail, we were reminiscing about the great Portsmouth Public Library that we visited on a regular basis in our youth. It was on Gallia Street, just east of Portsmouth High School. It was built with money donated by Andrew Carnegie, who gave millions to construct libraries all over the country.

We can remember taking "field trips" from Wilson, on Sixth Street and Campbell Avenue, to the Children's Library, which was in the basement of the main library and had its own entrance on the east side of the building. In those days, of course, we walked on our "field trip."

The Children's Library was presided over by Miss Olsen. We both have very fond memories of Miss Olsen. She was the stereotypical librarian of the 1940s. She was an older single woman who wore her hair in a tight bun in the back and had a classy demeanor. Miss Olsen had a beauty mark above her chin on one side and talked with just enough of a lisp to make her sound rather elegant. It was most prominent when she "shss'd" us for talking too loudly.

Do you remember the special pencil that Miss Olsen always used that had a date stamp fastened to it? She would use it to stamp the due date on the lined piece of paper that was always glued inside the back cover of the book that you were checking out. Then, very quickly and adeptly, she would maneuver the pencil around to write whatever she needed to complete the transaction.

Miss Olsen always seemed to enjoy taking her young charges under her wing to suggest particular books and authors that were appropriate to their interests and reading abilities. She attempted, in a gentle way, to bring order to your reading rather than allowing you to wander through the almost endless shelves of books looking at random for something interesting.

By the time we got to the sixth or seventh grade, Miss Olsen encouraged us to start exploring the "adult" library upstairs. In one sense, we were being gently weaned from the Children's Library. The adult librarians were always helpful, but they never knew our tastes as well as Miss Olsen did.

Thank you, Miss Olsen!

*A note to Anita Apel Biggs from
Blaine Bierley*

Some of the players and coaches attending the reunion



Dave Wagner

Larry Boren

Gerald Lawson

Leo Brown

Mike Brown



Wilson Jones, Bob Cooke

Bill Meade and Shirley (Borders), Bob Otworth and Nancy (Cox)

A group photo



Coach Bruce Schmidt

Coach Earl Gibson

Coach Ed Zoretic

Don Wallace

Jim Lindeman

Spencer Calloway



Clayton Howerton

Bruce Johnson, Gary Goodman, Harry Parker

Curt Gentry

Tony Price, Ray Mitchell, Preston Smith