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UMI
A COMPETITIVE BUSINESS: THE IDEOLOGIES, CULTURES, AND PRACTICES OF MEN'S AND WOMEN'S COLLEGE SPORTS DURING THE DEPRESSION

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

Bradley Ellis Austin, B.A., M.A.

The Ohio State University

2001

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. K. Austin Kerr, Adviser
Dr. Melvin Adelman
Dr. Susan Hartmann

Approved By

Adviser

Department of History
ABSTRACT

This is a study of how the uniquely American institution of "Big-Time" college athletics survived the ideological and financial challenges of the Great Depression and why many Americans thought this survival was important. As a study of institutional perseverance, this dissertation focuses on the financing and commercialization of athletics during the 1930s, the ideologies and belief systems that university leaders employed to justify the continuation of the athletic programs, and the conscious use of universities' athletic programs to build communities of interest in the universities themselves.

While American public universities suffered tremendous funding cuts during the 1930s, they also had to educate increasing numbers of students. The mounting financial troubles, coupled with a perceived increase in the number of radical student activists, contributed to a general sense of crisis on American college campuses. University leaders used their intercollegiate athletic programs to preserve traditional American values and institutions. By emphasizing the competitive nature of men's athletics, educators inculcated male college athletes with individualistic, masculine values, seeking to reinforce the existing American political and economic systems.

In contrast, the prevailing model of women's college athletics during the Depression taught a communal form of democracy. This model did not allow for individual attention or high-level competition, and it stressed "proper" femininity.
However, many female students and teachers felt constrained by the limitations imposed by this model. In 1941, a contingent of Ohio State educators controversially challenged their profession's leaders and coordinated the first national intercollegiate golf tournament for women, a turning point in the narrative of women's intercollegiate athletics.

The institution of college athletics survived the era's extreme financial challenges and the ideological challenges epitomized by the Carnegie Foundation's 1929 *American College Athletics* because its leaders successfully mustered justifications for maintaining the programs and because, in many places, at least football retained its profitability. However, the most compelling justification for the continuation of intercollegiate programs was that the teams and the publicity they attracted enabled the universities to build "imagined communities" of interest, drawing the allegiances of people who had never attended their classes and whose support was essential during the Depression.
Dedicated to LaGina
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I can not imagine working with a better dissertation committee; the members’
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VITA

17 March 1972 ........................................... Born—Oxford, Mississippi
1994 .............................................................. B.A., Lyon College—Batesville, Arkansas
1994-95 ........................................................ Rotary Scholar, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, Scotland
1995-1997 ................................................... Graduate Assistant, University of Tennessee, Knoxville
1997 .............................................................. M.A., The University of Tennessee, Knoxville
1997-98. ...................................................... Distinguished University Fellow, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio
1998-2000 ................................................... Graduate Teaching Associate, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio
2000-2001...................................................... Distinguished University Fellow, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

PUBLICATIONS


FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: History

Concentration in modern American history

Minor Fields: early American and modern European history
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INTRODUCTION

The Great Depression was a period of acute deprivation. Millions of Americans were hurt by the economic stagnation, high levels of national unemployment, low levels of public confidence, and the prevailing sense of national and international instability that pervaded the 1930s. The 1930s were a time of political experimentation in the United States, with thousands of Americans adapting extremist positions of one sort or another as they sought solutions for their problems, scapegoats for their troubles, and targets for their anger. However, although the Depression indeed sparked a great deal of political ferment, and although multitudes of Americans and American institutions did suffer financial ruin during the period, not all did. In fact, most did not. This dissertation is a study of the protection and perseverance of one of the many cultural and social institutions that survived the decade of the Depression relatively unscathed, if severely challenged: intercollegiate athletics.  

While it is easy to do so, historians must avoid the trap of characterizing the Depression as a uniformly tragic period. Certainly, throughout the 1930s all sorts of catastrophes lurked inside the realms of possibility for Americans, but for most, real ruin remained outside their experiences. Even in the worst periods, almost seventy-five percent of Americans seeking jobs had them. The American economic, social, cultural, and political systems did not collapse; instead, their organizers and participants adapted.
these structures to meet the challenges the decade offered. This dissertation belongs within the body of scholarship that seeks to present the “employed view” of the Depression. By explaining how a particular group of white, middle-class professionals (university administrators and officials) and a larger collection of predominately white, middle-class university alumni and friends protected intercollegiate athletics and the middle-class, “American,” values these sports taught young Americans, this study can promote understanding of how other cultural and social institutions weathered the ideological, political, economic, and cultural storms of the tumultuous thirties.

In his 1971 essay, “American Culture and the Great Depression,” Lawrence Levine noted the importance of studying the culture of the 1930s. He wrote, “It is ironic, then, that we still know so little about the culture of a decade that has made such a lasting imprint upon us, and that so much of what we do know is overwhelmingly political and institutional.” He continued, pointing out the problems with this approach, writing, “until relatively recently, we have spoken and written as if the political culture of the 1930s represented all of American culture; as if Franklin Roosevelt and his advisers spoke for the vast majority of Americans; as if one could understand the impact of the Depression upon American consciousness by comprehending the reform impulse of the 1930s.” Levine clearly believed that historians should pose new questions, that they should examine new topics. To this end he argued forcefully, “until we begin to explore more fully than we have the varied cultural dimensions of the Depression decade, we will continue to have more questions than answers.” This dissertation follows Levine’s suggestion and asks new questions about American culture and society during the 1930s.
Writing after Levine, Warren I. Susman, perhaps the foremost historian of 1930s American culture, argued that during the 1930s Americans looked for a common cultural ground where people could unite during a shared crisis. The economic collapse of the Depression was, Susman contended, more of a shock to the middle-class than to any other group. Despite this reasonable conclusion, historians have paid a disproportionate amount of attention to the working class and to fringe movements on the political left. For American farmers, ethnic and racial minorities, and the industrial working class, the Depression did not begin in 1929 or 1930 but much earlier. For the middle class, believing in the tandem of progress and prosperity, the experience was harrowing and unprecedented. The onset of the Depression introduced tangible fear and insecurity to the American middle class, and as middle-class Americans tried to insulate themselves from the insecurity attacking their lives and their psyches, they also tried to protect their institutions, including intercollegiate athletics, from attacks. In his *Culture as History* Susman echoed Levine and wrote about the 1930s, “the fact remains—and it is a vital one if we are to understand the period and the nature of American culture—that the period, while acknowledging in ways more significantly than ever before the existence of groups outside the dominant ones and even recognizing the radical response as important, is one in which American culture continues to be largely middle-class culture.” The institution of intercollegiate athletics served as an important component of this middle-class culture entering the decade, and it held a more important position at its end. This study of American intercollegiate athletics during the Great Depression offers a unique and useful perspective on the institutional, gender, and community dynamics that shook white, middle-class Americans during the 1930s.
This study has many, interconnected narratives surrounding its themes of institutional survival, the creation, institutionalization, and challenges of gender norms, and the cultivation of community during troubled times. During the 1930s, protectors of intercollegiate athletics faced two different types of challenges. One emerged from a highly publicized and extremely critical Carnegie Foundation report on the conduct of college athletics; the other resulted from the Depression itself. Although it was not the only expose of its kind, the 1929 Carnegie Report was easily the most influential and important. Entitled *American College Athletics* and authored primarily by Howard Savage, the Carnegie Report argued that intercollegiate athletic programs had abandoned their commitment to principled amateurism, that commercialization and professionalism undermined the purity of the college games, and that the universities needed to work more diligently to prevent, among many other things, the recruitment and compensation of players by alumni groups. The high level of publicity given to this report compelled university and athletic administrators to reexamine their institutions' athletic practices and to justify them to an inquiring press corps and the general public. Nor was the 1929 report the end of the matter. From time to time magazines published articles exposing the abuse of big time athletics, especially football, on campus, and some faculty members continued to criticize the corruption of the academy that so often seemed to accompany intercollegiate athletics.  

Significantly, the challenges to the existing structure and operation of intercollegiate athletics epitomized by the Carnegie Report grew out of a long history of criticism, not out of Depression conditions, but many other problems confronting
university officials had direct roots in the turmoil caused by the uncertainty and deprivation of the Depression years. After enjoying a decade of unprecedented growth in popularity and construction of facilities, athletic officials in the 1930s struggled to continue operating extensive athletic programs on sharply reduced budgets. They fought on for several reasons. First, they pragmatically and understandably wanted to protect their own jobs. Second, the athletic associations running intercollegiate athletics had assumed substantial debts as they upgraded facilities and paid professional coaches in the 1920s. These debts did not disappear along with the prosperous times; they remained, looming over the athletic associations as surely as did the newly constructed stadia over the surrounding academic buildings. Third, continuing a "progressive" view of athletics, the athletic officials sincerely believed that intercollegiate athletics could teach students valuable life lessons, lessons valuable not only to the individuals but to the society as a whole.*

Officials modified this final, more ideological justification for the continuation of athletics precisely because of the changing social context of the 1930s. As numerous scholars have noted this was a decade of intense political debate, and this debate occurred on university campuses all across the nation. Prompted by political, social, and economic disparities, and supported by national movements and communication, many student and faculty groups began lodging very public complaints about the established American social, economic, and political orders and their stated and implied priorities. These topics of protest ranged from local issues, such as racial discrimination on campuses, to national issues such as unemployment and the excessive influence of businessmen on government policy, to international issues such as anti-militarism and world peace. Campus
protesters often linked these issues through outspoken opposition to military training on campuses conducted by university chapters of the Reserve Officer Training Corps (R.O.T.C.). Although university environments had produced thinkers ready to challenge middle-class society and its institutions before the 1930s, in that decade such left-leaning social critics were more numerous, active, and vocal than ever before. Their numbers, actions, and rhetoric certainly caught the attention of already skittish middle-class campus administrators, and these university leaders responded to the challenges, real and perceived, by attacking the critical students and by crafting new justifications for existing institutions and activities, including the sporting ones.9

University and athletic conference officials came to argue in the 1930s that men’s intercollegiate athletics, characterized by unforgiving rules and fair competition, could teach the young men playing and watching the contests how to survive and thrive in the modern capitalist world. This world was defined by competition and operated with equally unyielding rules producing uncertain, and final, results. Officials argued that athletics could inculcate in the students certain vital lessons better than could any academic program: that only hard work, dedication, loyalty and perseverance could produce the possibility of success. Moreover, in the 1930s, proponents of this ideology of athletics intended intercollegiate contests to show the future business and political leaders of America—college athletes and the students who watched them—that the laissez-faire way was the only “American Way.” This search for an “American Way of Life” that justified their essential conservatism was, according to Susman, common in the American middle class during the tumult of the 1930s. This dissertation provides an important example of how the desire to identify and preserve this “American Way”
played out in the dominant American middle-class, particularly among educators and university administrators. In doing so, it follows the advice of Susman, who urged historians to refocus their attention on the middle-class's experiences of the 1930s, writing, "if we keep our focus on the middle class, we may also be better able to understand why some shifts to the Left proved so temporary or even why the period proved in the end so fundamentally conservative as it concentrated on finding and glorifying an American Way of Life."^{10}

American universities, then, spent the 1930s confronted by numerous challenges to the legitimacy of their methods and the society and institutions they helped uphold, and they also faced daunting financial difficulties caused by the massive economic downturn. College athletics were not exempt from this fall, but as this study demonstrates, the economic crisis for public universities and their athletic programs, though severe for the early 1930s, was neither as great nor as permanent as those trying to manage it initially feared. In fact, the public universities and the schools' athletic programs generally emerged from the 1930s relatively intact and often more stable than they had entered the decade.

This study also demonstrates that the Depression-era discussions of the importance of athletics in building character and inculcating "proper" values had explicit gender connotations, with educators teaching college women and men very different lessons about what was proper, desirable, "American," and "democratic." When comparing white, middle-class understandings of these terms with middle-class African-American or working-class, white understandings, it becomes very clear that race and class directly affected conceptions of proper behavior, especially for women. While this
was not novel to the 1930s. Depression conditions made the lessons seem even more important than before. During the 1930s, with many other traditional institutions and "American" values challenged, white male and female university officials, athletic and otherwise, labored to shield their female students from the destructive winds of change. In athletics particularly, female physical educators continued an intellectual and pedagogical movement designed to restrict female college students' high-level athletic opportunities and to curtail their competitive impulses.\textsuperscript{11}

Throughout the Depression, the actions of the movement's leaders reflected class, gender, and professional anxieties; they believed that drastic steps were necessary to protect middle-class women, in this case college women, from the excesses seen in both working-class women's sporting activities, particularly industrial league basketball games that capitalized on the display of young women's active bodies in colorful and rather revealing uniforms, and in men's intercollegiate athletics. The women working within the academy recognized fully the validity of the criticisms of men's intercollegiate sports expressed in \textit{American College Athletics}, and they wanted to prevent the commercialization, corruption, and impurity of the men's game from contaminating women's athletics. Women athletic leaders warned repeatedly and vehemently about the corruption that could be caused by an overemphasis on competition in women's athletics, especially since most female physical educators during the 1930s agreed with their male counterparts about the nature of acute competition: it was a masculine drive that was necessary for the continuation of American life as they knew it but that should be moderated very carefully in women. Women, the university educators held, should concentrate on "democratic" cooperation and companionship, not on the competitive
fight for glory and personal achievement, and they argued that only properly trained
women (themselves) could coordinate such a program.  

Although this was a national movement with great strength in the physical
education professional societies, during the 1930s a significant challenge to the existing
orthodoxy arose as dissenters emerged at several colleges and universities, most
importantly at Ohio State University. Women’s intercollegiate athletic programs had
never become completely extinct; they mostly survived the late 1920s and the 1930s in
new forms that offered games, sports, and activities that encouraged physical fitness
without allowing much direct or important competition. However, despite official
organizational edicts, educators and students at some schools continued to agitate for
additional competitive outlets for collegiate women throughout the 1930s. In the late
1930s, an Ohio State contingent of female physical educators proposed a new national
organization to oversee women’s intercollegiate athletics, a Women’s N.C.A.A., and a
national women’s intercollegiate golf tournament.

These upstarts were often a generation younger than their profession’s leaders, the
women who had created and defended the standards. As a generation that matured with
the right to vote, who had the license to challenge social norms during the 1920s, and
who had an ever-increasing number of female role models in public office and the public
sphere, these women were more willing than their elders to reconsider the limits of
acceptable activities for athletic college women during the 1930s. Although the specific
changes they proposed were remarkably moderate, the professional reaction was
decidedly immoderate. Analyzing the vitriol unleashed on the Ohio State leaders and
their proposals and studying the intramural and intercollegiate activities across the nation
will increase scholars’ knowledge of middle-class women’s athletics and activities during this period. Doing so will also shed some light on the conflicting ideas about what was desirable and permissible for white, middle-class women and collegiate wives-in-training that circulated within and emerged from the 1930s in the nation’s universities.\(^\text{13}\)

This study also contends that many American institutions survived the Depression by actively cultivating relationships with powerful individuals and interest groups and by associating themselves with certain popular and powerful belief systems. This occurred not only with large corporations but also in universities, their athletic conferences, and their professors’ professional organizations. Using Benedict Anderson’s model of imagined communities, this dissertation explores how the university officials tried to manipulate the desire for communal ties found across the increasingly impersonal nation by emphasizing the utility of universities’ academic programs to the citizens of the states they served and, more effectively, by using athletic teams to make the alumni and the general population stay interested in and supportive of public universities during such hard times.\(^\text{14}\)

Much to the chagrin of idealistic reformers, during the financial crunch of the Depression, universities increased their commercial orientation, marketing themselves to various communities by using athletes as their most visible and effective advertisement. In fact, although the universities’ leaders worked to preserve a “traditional” American culture based on old-fashioned “American values,” through their actions they helped solidify the existence of the emerging consumer culture.\(^\text{15}\) Using radio broadcasts, athletic publicity departments, charismatic male coaches, glossy game programs, and a willing cadre of newspaper publishers and writers, the university officials successfully
sold to the public and their alumni the possibility of being connected to a winning team, and more importantly to a larger, if imagined, community. By doing so, they generated measurable ticket revenue and immeasurable good will toward the state university. The success of this town-gown-touchdown connection, more than anything else, insured the continued survival of men's intercollegiate athletics during the dark days of the Depression.

Much of this study's detail comes from primary sources found in the archives of five representative American public universities: the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Maryland at College Park, the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, and the Ohio State University in Columbus. This approach strengthens the study in several ways. First, these universities called home the regions and athletic conferences that supplied the backbone of 1930s "Big Time" college athletics, including the Pacific Coast Conference, the Big Ten Conference, the Southern Conference, the Southeastern Conference, and the Southwestern Conference. Because of their regional diversity, these schools offer valuable sources for any study of the institutions and practices of big time college athletics during this period. Second, the sample includes institutions of vastly different scales in terms of student population, state support, and athletic spending and revenue, allowing a more complex understanding of how big, or small, "big time" athletics could be.

Third, the concentration on public schools also strengthens the study and contributes to its originality. While writing the history of the creation of American college sports and the culture that surrounded the institution, scholars have focused most
of their attention on the elite, private, and usually Eastern, universities that paved the way for others to follow. But, by the 1930s, the nation's large state universities were beginning to assert their dominance over the more established, but athletically fading traditional powers. Therefore, a sample drawn from the pool of these emerging powers seemed appropriate, especially considering the importance of the rhetoric of democracy to athletic officials during the period. Where better to evaluate the lessons of democratic sport than in the institutions created by the people and their representatives and that operated only at their pleasure and with their consent? The advantages of studying public universities seemed too great to ignore. Finally, each of these schools has significant archival holdings relating to their athletic operations and, as public universities, all allowed easy and full access to the collections. Although no university had all of the records I wanted to see, among them, they had enough to permit a comprehensive picture of the athletic programs and philosophies at American public universities to emerge.

By focusing on the actions and attitudes of five representative public universities during what almost all at the time perceived as a crisis for the nation and its universities, this study adds substantively to the sports history literature in one final way. Just as most of the literature on college athletics' formative years focuses on the Northeast and on private institutions, many also end their discussions by the 1920s. This situation caused Benjamin Rader to write in 1996 "no adequate treatment of the intercollegiate football spectacle exists for the entire 1890-1950 era." Those that do extend into the 1930s usually concentrate on only one institution, often ones unique in their celebration or cancellation of big-time college football: the University of Notre Dame and the
University of Chicago, for example. Since Rader's writing, a comprehensive look at college football has appeared in Watterson's recently published, College Football, but in its breadth and its concentration on controversy and spectacle, it leaves room for more detailed and focused discussions of a critical period in American college athletics, perhaps the last time when critics and conditions had a chance, though slight, to team together and alter the fundamental nature of American intercollegiate athletics. While not as comprehensive as Watterson's work, John Thelin's Games Colleges Play: Scandal and Reform in Intercollegiate Athletics also covers a broad spectrum of time and place, it focuses evaluates exclusively the extensive history of reform efforts and the reasons for the reformers' failure.

Wary of the unnecessary repetition and lack of cohesion that would have resulted from a pure, case study approach to my questions and the equally unsatisfactory confusion that a strictly chronological approach would have supplied, I have organized the chapters thematically. Chapters one and two deal most explicitly with the study's themes and questions of institutional survival, asking how the universities' leaders acted to protect their schools and their athletic programs from the Depression's effects. More specifically, chapter one examines how the nation's public universities suffered through and survived the financial difficulties of the Depression. Chapter two offers a more focused analysis of the same essential questions in terms of athletic departments' finances, using all types of financial records to uncover just how bad the Thirties were for athletic programs, how long the tough times lasted, and how officials sought to ameliorate and manage the crisis.
Chapters three, four, and five, focus on the importance of gender constructions to the prevailing ideologies of athletics. Chapter three examines the masculine values and competitive lessons male athletic leaders believed their intercollegiate sports programs should teach the future leaders of American society. Just as importantly, it shows how athletic leaders connected these values and lessons to specific American institutions and belief systems, putting these discussions within the context of the social turmoil of college campuses during the period. Chapter four looks closely at the process of establishing and implementing a dominant philosophy of women's sports, asking how this ideology spread and how completely were the individual universities able to implement the orthodoxy. Chapter five expands this discussion, asking how and why the challenges to the official expectations for athletic, middle-class college women rose during the Depression. Finally, chapter six attempts to bring together the other themes of the dissertation in its discussion of the universities' attempts to create real and imagined communities through the commercialization and commodification of athletics.


Warren I. Susman, *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 192-194. Susman correctly noted that this insecurity had more causes than the onset of the Depression, citing the instability caused by the characteristic American mobility, both social and physical, as another root.


Susman, *Culture as History*, 192. For an excellent study of the creation and continuation of working-class culture during the 1920s and 1930s, again see Cohen, *Making a New Deal*.


Susman, *Culture as History*, 192.


13 Again, see Cahn, Coming on Strong, Hult, and Smith for more detailed discussions.


15 As Susman put it, during the 1930s Americans waged a “determined struggle for the attainment of the identity of an American Way of Life, a definition of culture in America and for Americans with an increased emphasis on strengthening basic cultural institutions seriously threatened by newer cultural forms . . . and the profound experiences of depression and war.” See Culture as History, 199-200. Most scholars date the emergence of this new consumer culture to the decade of the 1920s. In addition to Susman, see Roland Marchand, Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), and Richard Wightman Fox and T. J. Jackson Lears, eds., The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1980 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983). In their introduction, Fox and Lears point out that “by the mid-twentieth century the celebrants of consumption were not visionaries like [Edward] Bellamy or [Henry] Ford, but defenders of the status quo.” Page ix.


17 Watterson, College Football.

18 Watterson, College Football; Thelin, Games Colleges Play.
CHAPTER 1

IN THE "TROUGH OF A DEPRESSION": THE FATE AND FINANCES OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES DURING THE 1930S

"We expect to see the citizens of Ohio to give short shrift to any possible cry of 'economy,' 'hard times' and the like. If more mothers and fathers than ever before can afford to send their sons and daughters to the Ohio State University, the state itself can afford to balance the account by providing adequate teaching staff and facilities to take care of them." The Ohio State Monthly, 1930

"Such a swarm of job applications surround me all the time that I am forced to urge almost anybody to hold on like grim death to any job they happen to have. Besides, teaching is such a poorly paid profession and the competition for places is so fierce and there is a appreciable lack of independence due to community and institutional opinion."

H. Y. Benedict, University of Texas President, 1935.

"[Budget cuts] can only be a temporary expedient, for instructors cannot be held more than a few years without increases in salary and equivalent changes in rank. Unless this recognition is given, the capable men resign; only the less capable remain. This type of deterioration will become serious unless additional funds can be promptly supplied."

Robert G. Sproul, University of California President, 1939

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“Had it not been for the timely aid of the Federal Government through the N.Y.A. the University would certainly not have discharged its teaching and public service responsibilities as successfully as it has.” Robert G. Sproul, 1939

American public universities felt the effects of the Great Depression just as forcefully and as painfully as most other large American institutions, and they responded to the challenges of the Depression in a fairly uniform manner. While their responses reflected the differences created by their local economic and political contexts, the universities also displayed many common reactions. The national economic crisis forced large state universities to budget their resources more closely and carefully, to cut their payrolls, to create new oversight boards, to seek new sources of revenue, and to reevaluate their commitments to academic and athletic programs. Examining how representative large, public universities grappled with the Great Depression can help historians understand institutional responses to the crisis of the 1930s in addition to illuminating how universities adapted their structures and the ways they imagined and presented their missions throughout the Depression and into the war and post-war era. Understanding the larger goals and problems of these institutions is an essential prerequisite to understanding how members of the college communities thought about athletics and why many believed athletic programs helped further broad university goals.

Throughout the 1930s, large, public universities had to accommodate their rapidly expanding student populations while dealing with shrinking operating budgets. State legislatures simply could not fund higher education at the levels that they had previously and certainly not at the levels the decades’ increasing numbers of students seemingly mandated. Instead, during the 1930s state legislatures dramatically cut funding to public
universities, while, at the same time, they demanded that the universities not only maintain their existing character but also expand their range of services provided to the general public. The conflict between the universities' missions and the available resources was not lost on the university administrators who had to make some tough choices of their own. During the worst years of the crisis for most universities, 1931-37, universities slashed salary rates, teaching positions, equipment budgets, and even entire academic departments. Many public university presidents felt so threatened that they were compelled to announce that the universities themselves would remain open. In many ways, this was a real crisis for public higher education, and the beleaguered leaders of universities certainly perceived of it that way.

However, like most other American cultural, social, government, and financial institutions, the public universities survived the Depression in essentially the same form as they had entered it, and a close examination of the experiences of representative public universities will explain why and how they did so. These universities felt the pinch of hard times in innumerable ways, yet by managing their resources carefully, building personal and institutional relationships with a wide variety of interested communities, and selling themselves as vital instruments of public welfare they emerged remarkably unchanged and in many ways strengthened. By the late 1930s, faculty salaries in most places had returned to near their late 1920s levels, as had the levels of state support. Moreover, the universities established important new relationships during the Depression with the federal government, particularly with New Deal agencies whose funding helped employ the universities’ students and improve their campuses. In the early 1930s, however, the leaders of American institutions, educational or otherwise, could not
anticipate this relatively happy ending. The sense of crisis that they felt throughout the Depression influenced the way they thought about all aspects of American and university life, including their views about athletics.¹

Although university campuses remained overwhelmingly the domain of the middle and upper classes during the 1920s, more people than ever before attended college during this decade. Consequently, more Americans felt the Depression's effect on American universities than would have a mere decade before. In 1920 the American undergraduate population numbered 341,000; by the end of the decade, more than 750,000 Americans were enrolled in college courses. The numbers of courses offered increased proportionately. In 1930 Stanford offered 1,095 classes, 385 more than it had offered 10 years before. Similarly, Howard University almost doubled its course offerings, from 143 to 255, and the University of Alabama almost tripled its number of courses, going from 158 to 437 during the 1920s.²

Detailed comparisons among representative state universities highlight this pattern and help put the 1930s' continued expansion of student populations into proper perspective. Enrollment at the University of Texas at Austin (U.T.A.) and at the University of California at Berkeley (U.C.B.) increased dramatically in the decades before the Depression. In 1910-11, the main campus of the University of Texas enrolled 1,729 undergraduate students. By 1920-21, the student population had exploded to 4,056. During the 1920s U.T.A.'s undergraduate population increased another 40 percent, with 5,763 undergraduates in 1929-30. In sum, in the twenty years before the Depression, U.T.A.'s total student population grew more than 330 percent. The growth at
Berkeley was even greater. In 1909-10, 2,953 undergraduates (1,080 of them women) and 425 graduate students attended U.C.B.; by 1919-1920 there were almost 9,000 undergraduates attending classes. The student population plateaued during the 1920s, however, as the University of California enrolled more than 9,000 undergraduates only once during the decade, and by 1929-30 UCB had 8,959 undergraduates.³

The University of Tennessee at Knoxville (U.T.K.) and the Ohio State University at Columbus (O.S.U.) experienced similar tremendous growth in their respective student populations during the relatively prosperous 1920s. In 1919-20, U.T.K.'s fall enrollment was 1,194; ten years later, over twice as many students, 2,433, studied on "the Hill." In contrast, building upon an already impressive student population exceeding 7,000 in the early 1920s, Ohio State had grown to more than 14,000 by the end of the decade. The decade of the 1920s was a time of unparalleled growth and optimism for most public universities. This optimism would not last long into the 1930s, even though the pattern of growth would continue relatively unabated.⁴

Despite the Depression era's real threats to the nation's entire system of public higher education, students continued to flock to the country's campuses. Historian Donald Wisenhunt reasonably attributed the continued growth of U.T.A.'s student population to the nation's high unemployment rates and to the relatively low costs of state colleges and universities. Beginning the decade with a student population numbering below 6,000, the University of Texas experienced steady growth, educating a student population exceeding 8,500 by 1936-37. The academic year 1933-34 offered the only slight exception to this trend, when enrollment fell from 6,739 to 6,652. However, the next year, 1934-35, enrollment increased by over a thousand to 7,662, and it
continued to grow during the rest of the decade, crossing the 10,000-student barrier in 1937-38.5

The University of California experienced similar growth during this period as the California sunshine could not prevent an economic fog from rolling into Bay Area as it did across the rest of the nation. The UCB undergraduate student population increased each year between 1929-30 and 1939-40, totaling a growth of almost sixty-five percent.6 At the University of Tennessee, the increase was even more dramatic, as after a minor dip in 1931-32, the student numbers doubled for the second consecutive decade, totaling 5,730 in 1939-40.7

With the increasing numbers of college and university students came increased taxpayer expectations, if not legislative assistance. These expectations often came in the form of explicit statements about the duties of public institutions, such as this September 1931 message from “poor old Country Boy” to the University of Texas president and registrar:

There is going the rounds in state circles that you are noted for getting these poor little country boys and girls enrolled get their fees and in a few weeks Bodily kick them out. Just at these depressing times when the people are clamoring for a bare existence and when poor ambitious folks are borrowing money to get their loved children in School, you high browed bullies who have been bullying and kicking poor kids out, you had better take a measure of warning and tell your harebrained PHD’s and Old Maids and Wee small Mustached Prof’s that they had better get comfort to these Ambitious young people and see to it that not quite so many Freshmen are kicked out. Better take warning for if these depressed times keep up you will have a Hell of a time explaining your damned rules.6

This correspondent expected cordiality, consideration, and a very high percentage of passing grades given to the students of his state’s public university, and he felt entitled
to demand those conditions in the most explicit of terms. In an economy with very few jobs, many Americans expected the state universities to occupy the time of young adults for a few years and to prepare them for later success. Although this author was not alone in his expectations or in his perceptions of UTA as a privileged place, American university officials during the 1930s painted a much different picture as budget growth did not in any way match the growth in student population.

Many Americans viewed universities as the domains of privileged and pampered "harebrained PHD’s,” forcing public university presidents to spend a good deal of their time countering this public misconception and proving their institutions’ poverty. Perhaps no public university had a more difficult case to make that the University of Texas, and the man most responsible for shaping the public perception of UTA during the 1930s was its president, Harry Y. Benedict, the first alumnus of the university to lead the institution. The general population’s belief in the University’s affluence stemmed from the University’s ownership of thousands of acres of mineral-rich land, profitably leased to oil and gas companies after 1924. The University of Texas at Austin profited from the provisions of the Texas constitution of 1876 that set aside one million acres of public domain land for the use of the state university system. Seven years later, the state legislature allocated another million acres for the same purpose. Located in semi-arid regions of western Texas, the land was impossible to sell, and railroad companies consistently rejected it as worthless. Primarily leased as grazing lands, revenues from these two million acres funded the construction of almost all of UTA’s buildings up through 1928 while also helping to offset operating expenses. This income was essential
to the functioning and growth of the university because the state constitution prohibited using tax money to construct university buildings. In 1924 prospectors discovered oil on the university's lands, and the money soon thereafter began flowing into the university's coffers just as quickly as the oil gushed from the ground. Unfortunately for university administrators, the money still had restrictions: all money from the new oil and gas royalties went directly into the university's permanent fund, and the university could spend only the income from the fund's investments. In 1929-30 four oil fields on university land produced more than 40,000 barrels of oil, generating royalties exceeding $2,000,000 in addition to the lease revenue of $1,800,000. Although this was a certainly a substantial source of income, one all other universities in the country would have cherished, it was not as lucrative as its appearance suggested to most Texans. In 1935 president Benedict explained this fact to the University of Texas Ex-Students Association, telling the assembly that "oil is the chief source of University wealth and your lack of knowledge of the University is its chief source of poverty." Benedict continued, contrasting the revenue of UTA to that of other institutions, arguing that the alumni and friends of other universities were contributing more to their schools than oil money did to UTA. He concluded that "active and informed Ex-Students are worth far more than gushing oil wells" to American universities.

The leaders of almost all public universities, including the University of Texas, would have been satisfied with simple, sustained support from their state legislatures, but such support was not forthcoming, especially before 1937-38. In a 1935 commencement address, Benedict very publicly summarized his position on state support of education.
He told the graduates and their guests that "the amount spent for chewing gum in Texas is about equal to the amount spent for the University, and all education, public, private, and denominational, upper, lower, and in the middle, costs not more than one fifth as much as we are spending for automobiles." One can infer that Benedict thought he had identified misplaced priorities in his home state.

The frustration Benedict expressed in 1935 had built up over the preceding five years as he struggled with the state legislature to protect the university's national stature along with its faculty members' salaries, autonomy, and morale. It was not an easy task. Meeting biennially, the state legislature had budgeted precisely the same amount, $1,408,810 for the 1929-30 and 1930-31 academic years. In a period of national deflation, this stability actually meant a slight ($32,023) increase in purchasing power. That stability ended very quickly; the next appropriation bill, for the 1931-32 fiscal year, slashed almost $400,000 from U.T.A.'s budget. Even when the budget's size is adjusted for deflation to just more than $1,120,000 in 1929 dollars, the cuts were still substantial. These cuts included a total of $206,696 from the university's teaching budget, which funded tutors, maintenance, equipment, and salaries, and $190,515 from the non-teaching budget. Over the next several years, the situation would only get worse, not only at Texas but elsewhere at well.11

Much like the Texas officials, the University of California administrators recognized the problems of student growth during in a stagnant economy almost immediately, and after Robert Sproul assumed the university presidency in July 1930, one of his primary missions was to secure sufficient state funding for university operations. Few people could have been better suited for the challenge than Sproul. Like
Benedict of Texas, Sproul was his school's first alumnus to become the institution's president, and many hailed Sproul's ascension as the quintessential American success story. As a child Sproul had supported himself through various odd jobs, and as a California student he had lettered in track while also leading the campus Y.M.C.A. A 1913 graduate, Sproul had returned to his alma mater after only a year, working his way through the bureaucratic maze by serving as a cashier, secretary to the Regents, and comptroller. He offered more than institutional experience and loyalty to his beloved university; among Sproul’s other gifts were an excellent speaking voice, a persuasive style, and a history of deep thought about the importance of a university to a state and a democracy. According to historian of the university, Verne A. Stadtman, Sproul’s educational philosophies “were the products of his personal experience, the examples of his predecessors . . . the political stance of progressive Republicanism, the morality of the Presbyterian church, and the ethics of his fellow Rotarians.” Sproul’s commitment to the university, its ideals, and its standards, along with his persuasive abilities, would serve the university well throughout his tenure, especially during the 1930s.

Two years into the 1930s, and eighteen months into his tenure as university president, Sproul issued his biennial report to the governor. Sproul wrote in December of 1932 that the university’s story during the prior two years had “been one of achievement in the face of difficult general conditions” and that the “adequate appropriations” granted by the state legislature had allowed the university to “weather the years of stress without serious impairment to its efforts.” Sproul was not as optimistic about ability of the university to persevere as admirably through the upcoming budget cycle as large cuts loomed. In December 1932 the State Affairs Committee suggested slashing $39,520,000
from the state’s education budget, with millions of the cuts coming directly from the University of California. In an effort to help balance the state’s books, Sproul and his staff submitted a university budget that was almost 18 percent lower than the previous one, although Sproul cautioned the governor that such a reduction would “mean curtailment of some activities important to the present and future welfare of the State.” His message was clear: reduce our budget, and you will reduce our usefulness to the citizens of California when they need us the most.15

As a former liaison between the university and legislators in Sacramento, Sproul had a finely tuned sense of the limits of the legislature’s will and ability to fund the university’s programs and growth. His accurate sense during the early years of the 1930s was that the state could afford very little. In 1929-30, the state of California granted to the UC system almost $8.5 million, including $1.3 million for capital improvements, and in 1930-31, the university received a similar $7.3 million with building funds. In 1931-32 and 1932-33, as Sproul indicated, the university still enjoyed a stable level of support, receiving more than $8 million each year from the state for operations and construction projects. Although Sproul had warned that the university required adequate funding to continue “the never-ending search for the truth that still . . . is the only liberator of the people,” and that the “reduction of costs is hailed as a facile panacea,” by 1933-34, the bottom dropped out of the university’s revenue trough. That year, the state appropriated only $6.1 million to the university system, and although the next several years saw annual increases of between $100,000 and $400,000, the state funding did not again exceed $7 million until 1937-38, after which it continued growing incrementally and slowly. In a
period of growing student numbers, president Sproul, like most of his counterparts, believed his university was underfunded and its efforts underappreciated.16

In his 1938 report to the governor, Sproul did not hide his frustration, introducing the entire document with his contention that "the administration and faculty ha[d] done their best to meet the impossible situation created by six years of depression and subnormal State appropriations, on the one hand, and by steadily increasing student enrollments and demands for public services, on the other." The conditions of these six years had forced many difficult decisions at Berkeley and at the other six UC campuses and the lack of state support threatened to continue a process of "internal decay." According to Sproul’s calculations, to maintain, not increase, the 1930 level of support for the university and its students, the state should have provided an additional $18 million over the preceding 8 years. Sproul recognized that the state “must still practice economy if it is to carry those relief burdens that the physical welfare of the populace demands,” but he also insisted that the university’s physical and intellectual welfare was similarly threatened by the lack of support. In 1940, the situation had not changed enough to satisfy Sproul, as he labeled the period from 1938-40 "one of the most difficult in the history of the University." Sproul lamented that the "limited financial relief that the Legislature of 1939 felt justified in granting . . . [was not] sufficient either to overcome the cumulative effect of the depression budgets of the past six years, or to meet the added burden" of an overwhelming influx of new students during the decade.17

The Depression also hit the people and largely agricultural economy of Tennessee hard. With the onset of general economic instability, augmented by existing drought-induced troubles of the state’s farmers, Tennessee businesses began to fail. In 1930, over
240 Tennessee businesses failed; in 1931, more than 350 did likewise, followed by an additional 578 failures the following year. Meanwhile many Tennessee banks were closing their doors as well, including the Holston Union National bank that failed in November 1930 while holding more than $400,000 in UTK funds. The university would never recover this much-needed money. Adding insult to injury, the university’s administrators discovered in that same year that the school’s treasurer, a beloved secretary to the Board of Trustees and someone who had worked at the university for more than forty years, had stolen more than ten thousand dollars from the institution. This was hardly an auspicious beginning to the new decade. By this time, the university could ill afford to surrender its resources to failure of institutions or of convictions, because the 1931 state legislature would prove far more parsimonious than its predecessor.18

As happened across the nation, and throughout the economy, the early 1930s brought many difficulties to large institutions, public and private. Unfortunately for the University of Tennessee, state leaders realized that they could no longer spend money they did not have. In several sessions the 1931 General Assembly chipped away at the University of Tennessee’s appropriation package. The regular session of the legislature knocked off 10.1 percent from the 1929 appropriation of $925,000, and, after the state property tax had been repealed, the special session of the legislature removed an additional $124,000 from U.T.K.’s allotment. This left the 1931 budget a full 23.6 percent lower than the one approved only two years before, while deflation had caused only a 12 percent increase in the value of money. At the same time the student newspaper, the Orange and White, began running a series of articles by a student about
his experiences with “regular bums,” comparing that group explicitly with his other main category, “college students” and implying that existing conditions might force the two categories to merge into one. The articles ran under the ominous title, “If This Depression Keeps Up, Read This for Advice.” In the next year, 1932, Tennesseans responded to conditions by electing a new governor who campaigned on a platform of strict economy and harsh spending reductions. University officials recognized the ramifications of these campaign promises as soon as governor Hill McAlister took office and began confronting a state deficit exceeding $16,000,000 and outstanding bonds worth more than $85,000,000. Despite university officials’ pleas, McAlister could not exempt the state universities from his cost-cutting measures.¹⁹

University officials would have been much happier with the newly reduced appropriations if the school had actually received all the money that the legislature promised. It did not, and the university treasurer refused to let the absence go unnoticed, bombarding the state comptroller with letters calling attention to the missing funds. These unfailingly polite letters gently reminded the comptroller of the problem, telling him, for example, “the State, as you know, is $514,250.00 in arrears on the University’s appropriation.” The messages usually concluded with the note that university officials “trust that this letter will remain attached to the report in order that anyone examining it may have a complete understanding of the University’s financial situation.”²⁰ In July 1933 acting university president Hoskins informed the university’s trustees that the failure to receive even the limited funds promised to the university had led to “consolidations of departments, elimination of members of the faculty and employees, and reductions of activities that necessarily mean[t] an inadequate operation of the
university." Many surviving letters and memos from late 1932 and from 1933 expressed sincere optimism that the university's checks would probably not bounce, while others offered suggestions on how UTK could raise more money from students if not from the legislature. 

Despite concerns about losing its accreditation, the University of Tennessee managed to continue its operations, persevering on annual state support of less than $500,000 from 1933-1936. As James Montgomery described, the state's gradually improving financial condition, along with the election of a new governor in 1936, Gordon Browning, brought some much-needed optimism to the university by the latter part of the decade. This initial optimism was compounded when university officials learned that Browning wanted to increase the university's appropriation by over $300,000, to a total of $750,000. However, as happened elsewhere, including the University of Texas, increased legislative interference became part of the university's appropriations packages during the Depression.

Browning took office in 1937 with a mission to refinance the state's almost $130 million dollar debt, up from $97 million at the beginning of the decade, and to increase state revenue. By May 1937, Browning had pushed through the state legislature a new revenue bill that raised taxes on more than a hundred kinds of businesses as well as a plan to pay down the debt by consolidating all debts and issuing one type of bond to finance it. From 1937-1939 the University of Tennessee "voluntarily" adhered to the restrictions of a new reorganization law that mandated state government offices in Nashville to dispense all state funds for specific, and approved, purposes only. In other words, state budget officers and bureaucrats had veto power over
the state university’s expenditures, exercising the power to “impound” appropriated funds until they were certain that the necessary assets were in place. As Montgomery explained, “in practice [impounding] meant the loss of appropriations.” The university fought to gain exemption from the statute, but until it did in 1939, it suffered from the many problems associated with unsure revenue streams. University officials constructed budgets based on the promised appropriations but found they had to operate on considerably less. In 1938, president Hoskins warned the trustees that the university had to get more money somehow or it risked losing its accreditation. The state budget director publicly responded to Hoskins’ concerns by doubting if the loss of accreditation would significantly hurt the university since, as one editor quoted him as saying, it “never has been anything but a second-rate school.” Conveniently for the university, within a few weeks of this increasingly personal and public squabble, and after picking a fight with the political boss of Memphis, Governor Browning lost the most important election in 1930s Tennessee politics, the Democratic primary, to Prentice Cooper.

Cooper, once elected governor, worked to insure that the university got the funds promised to it and that it could use these funds without impounding or oversight. At the same time president Hoskins publicly argued that public education was the key to sing the South, contending that “the South’s failure to meet national standards of health, housing, wealth, and income is almost precisely in proportion to the failure to support public education.” Hoskins envisioned state universities as a sort of civil “officers’ training camp[s],” preparing men and women to act more socially responsibly and to seek useful careers “designed to relieve the economic and social distress burdening the South,” not just to fatten their wallets. Despite this and other arguments for the necessity of
well-financed state universities, governor Cooper did not push for the $1,000,000 appropriations that university officials considered essential. He was, however, still a much closer university ally in Nashville than his predecessors, and under his leadership the university would again reach 1929 funding levels in the early 1940s.29

The relationship between the University of Maryland and the Maryland state government highlights the enduring importance of personality, personal connections, and good fortune, even during (perhaps especially during) tough times. Although the state legislature had approved the 1920 formation of the University of Maryland, accomplished by merging two existing institutions, the university’s position had never been secure. In fact, one contentious budget squabble led some legislators to threaten the institution’s dissolution. Historian George Callcott observed that “although it was easy for the general assembly to approve a merger [of the schools], it was something else to take responsibility for it.”30 With the university’s Baltimore professional schools and the College Park campus never really under the same administrative control, budgeting seemed predestined to be difficult. It certainly was. The university’s president from September 1926 through June 1935, Raymond A. Pearson possessed neither the ability to inspire enthusiasm nor a vision for creating a hotbed of intellectual activity. Instead, Pearson was more of an operator than an originator, someone worried more about the building of classrooms than what occurred within them. Coinciding almost exactly with the onset of economic difficulties and still facing a stingy legislature and governor, Pearson’s tenure at the University was not a happy or a particularly successful one, and his presidency and personal style offered the perfect contrast to that of his one-time assistant, almost complete opposite, and eventual successor, Harry C. Byrd.31
Pearson had the unfortunate luck to arrive in College Park at almost the exact same time that a general depression did. By all accounts Pearson proved unable to expel either the economic or social depression from the campus, and in fact, he played a role in perpetuating the general malaise. Callcott reported that by 1927 the combination of farmers struggling with the consequences of overproduction and blaming the university's agricultural agencies for their problems, the continued fiscal restraint practiced by the state government, and Pearson's lack of imagination, unwillingness to fight to protect the university's budget, and inability to inspire others undermined campus morale long before the stock market crashed in New York. Actually, the state appropriation to UM increased slightly during Pearson's early years, growing from $229,242 in 1926-27 to $268,047 in 1927-28 and 1928-29 to $311,947 in 1929-30. However, these numbers pale in contrast to the increases his predecessor, Albert F. Woods had desired. In pursuit of his vision of making the University of Maryland a world-class university, Woods had pushed for a doubling of the 1926-27 budget and for more than $3,500,000 in extra appropriations to finance a large building campaign, and Pearson did not choose to fight that battle. After meeting with governor Ritchie, Pearson agreed to comparatively small general budget increases and a $935,000 building fund. This one-sided compromise set the tone for the rest of the Pearson administration: as enrollment almost doubled under his nine-year watch, there was not a parallel rise in educational spending. In fact, after the university secured $332,047 for the year 1932-33, the funding level for educational purposes dropped to the $220,000s for the following three years. Whereas in 1927-28, the state provided 44.28 percent of the cost of educating students at College Park, by
1935-36, that percentage had fallen to 28.79, while the state's contribution per student during the same period had fallen from $224.50 to $109.86.\textsuperscript{32}

To give Pearson personal responsibility for all of the problems of the University of Maryland during the early years of the Great Depression would be an error. Most likely, the state legislature could not and would not have granted much more generous spending bills, and as the evidence from Ohio, California, Tennessee, and Texas demonstrates, the struggles at Maryland were not dramatically different than the challenges elsewhere in higher education. The sums certainly differed greatly, but the general trends followed the same path. What eventually cost Pearson the confidence of his faculty and ultimately his job was the perception that he was not truly concerned with supporting and nurturing academic excellence. He was a builder who worked closely with Governor Ritchie, a politician who wanted to compensate the university for operating more inexpensively during lean years while also generating construction jobs. Together these men gained more than $4,000,000 for construction projects at College Park and Baltimore, but his collaboration with a spendthrift legislature and governor and his refusal to fight the good fight as the faculty saw it, cost Pearson the support of the people teaching in the new buildings he helped finance.\textsuperscript{33}

Harry Clifton Byrd replaced Pearson, first on an interim basis, and then as the permanent university president. Much like Sproul at California, Byrd was an institutional legend, a former athlete when the school was still the Agricultural College, and someone who had fulfilled almost every role at the institution since then, most notably as successful football coach, vice president—a position created just for him—and the public face of an institution. His reputation as a personable winner served him well throughout
his overlapping careers, athletic, administrative, and political. If Pearson’s personality and lack of enthusiasm had depressed all associated with him, then Byrd’s had the opposite effect. He was the consummate charmer, an incredibly handsome man who did not deny rumors about his romances with undergraduate women and who even got H. L. Mencken to praise him. “Curley” Byrd, as almost everyone knew him, was, like Pearson, not an intellectual’s intellectual. More importantly, however, Byrd clearly cared about the university. He served the university by using his personal skills and his political connections to secure ever-increasing sums of money from the state and federal governments. During the late 1930s, these connections and his personal magnetism aided the University of Maryland immeasurably.34

The power of personality can take a person only so far within an organization; at some point he or she must produce results. While he had innumerable valuable connections at all levels of government, in many ways the university’s return to relative prosperity over which Byrd presided was more the result of luck than any plan or action. The university received a $1,000,000 bequest; the new governor restored many of the University’s budget cuts, and several New Deal programs, particularly the Public Works Administration, began pouring money and concrete into the College Park building and educational programs and building a sense of institutional momentum. Although any University of Maryland president would have had similar opportunities during these years, the combination of the new financial resources and Byrd’s optimism and charisma encouraged observers to give Byrd the credit for the revitalization of the university despite their realization that, in many ways, Byrd was simply more fortunate than Pearson had been.35
While Pearson was still president, the Board of Regents learned that governor was planning on reinstating much more than $100,000 to the university budget and on giving the Board the authority to use the funds as it saw fit. Almost immediately upon becoming acting president of the university, Byrd announced that the National Youth Administration would provide approximately $50,000 for UM students during the 1935-36 school year, and by March 1937, Byrd could report to the Board that the university would probably get from the state legislature all that it asked for, assuming the funds were available. In September 1937, Byrd told the Regents that he expected a $30,000 budget surplus that the university could use for general maintenance and operation. After intense and personal lobbying of the legislature to convince the members that the university needed one large appropriation, and that such would “be ample for many years to come,” Byrd got even more money for the next biennium than he had originally requested. Conditions looked so good to president Byrd that he wanted to tell a Chapel Hill colleague his good news. Byrd wrote that “things are going so well I am half way beginning to look for ‘the nigger in the woodpile.’ In the last Legislature we got another million and a quarter dollars for a building program, and our annual maintenance appropriation was raised from $738,000 to $2,302,000.”

Besides giving a glimpse into the racial vernacular that was common even among educated whites in Maryland, as the controversy over the university’s law school integration in 1935 also highlighted, this statement shows Byrd’s optimism about the future of the University of Maryland in late 1937. Later appropriations bills would test this optimism, as later reduced appropriations again forced the university’s leaders to contemplate salary cuts. After a great deal of negotiations, in which Byrd proposed that
the University use Board of Public Works money and increased student fees to offset any legislative cuts, the budget was balanced, even allowing for a few small raises to placate disgruntled faculty members. By the middle of 1940, Byrd could again declare the "present financial condition of the University" was "satisfactory."^7

It is only fair to point out that the state legislatures that vexed the university administrators had to address many more pressing concerns than the diminished status of their largest public universities during the 1930s. In a decade of countless tough choices, state legislators could not keep everyone satisfied, much less pleased. Public university presidents and other administrators could not accomplish this task either. As Tennessee's Hoskins explained, the budgetary cutbacks led to a wide and damaging array of remedies, including the systematic slashing of professors' and administrators' salaries, eliminating full-time faculty positions, cutting equipment budgets, and even consolidating or eliminating entire departments. In many places talk of closing the universities entirely forced the presidents to announce officially the continuation of the university's operations. This is the key point: in spite of numerous substantial financial, personnel, and departmental cutbacks, while the responsibilities of the universities increased dramatically during the 1930s, the nation's public universities largely managed to continue meeting their responsibilities.

One uniform response to the financial troubles of the 1930s among public universities was to cut the salaries of their professors; another shared response was to eliminate faculty and administration positions altogether. For example, the Texas state legislature adopted a "general salary reduction rule" when preparing the 1933-35
appropriations bill. This bill instituted a sliding scale of university salary cuts, ranging from a 35 percent cut of salaries that had been over $6,500 in 1932 to a 25 percent cut of all salaries under $2,800. The new bill established maximum teaching salaries of $4,200, a sum received by little more than 50 out of 255 professors in 1931-32. However, the new bill also identified certain people by name to be paid more than their peers within the same salary classifications. Many in the university community took extreme exception to this situation. After officially recognizing the necessity of budget reductions and expressing willingness to “share proportionately in the reduction,” a group of UTA professors argued, “control of rank, salary, and promotion by the President and Regents is preferable to adjustment of such details—however well meant—by the Legislature.” These faculty members also pointed out that the potential for favoritism and political maneuvering would create a “demoralizing situation in the University.” If paying professors and instructors much less to teach many more students seemed unfair to UTA faculty members, then having the state legislature identify particular professors as more deserving than their peers seemed even worse.

Along with the presidents of fourteen other Texas state universities, President Benedict took his concerns directly to the Governor and to the individual members of the state legislature in January 1937. The presidents pointed out that between 1928-29 and 1934-35, inclusive, the state had cut funding of higher education by 49 percent, while enrollment across the state had increased 22 percent. During this six-year period, the state had reduced the amount it spent per student a full 58 percent. Arguing that “higher education, to be efficient, must receive more liberal appropriations,” the united presidents pled for additional funds for the next biennium.
The governor and legislature found some merit in the presidents' arguments. Although they could not restore all salaries to previous levels, they did have the ability and the will to return many of them to 1932-33 standards. In 1936-37, the compensation of U.T.A.'s instructors, assistant professors, and associate professors returned completely to previous levels, with a maximum salary of $3,400. However, the sliding scale remained in place, though modified, for full professors at UTA. Whereas in 1932-33 the salary scale for full professors had ranged from $3,750 to $6,500, the 1936-37 budget limited them to salaries between $3,600 and $5,500. This represented in every case at least 84 percent of the previous salary, and in most cases a restoration of more than 90 percent.\footnote{Again, as a result of deflationary pressures, this adjustment constituted a raise in “real” dollars. However, it is easily possible to take this point too far. Fixed debt, be it on houses, cars, school buildings, or bonds, remained the same, and actually became more difficult to pay off with the lower salaries.}

In October 1930, the editors of Ohio State's alumni publication apparently remained blissfully unaware that the nation's economic problems would ever trouble their alma mater. They argued that the university's increased enrollment necessitated parallel increased appropriations, and they fully expected that the state legislature would provide for all necessities, regardless of the economic conditions. Moreover, the alumni publication’s editors counted on the support of Ohio’s population, writing, “We expect to see the citizens of Ohio to give short shrift to any possible cry of ‘economy,’ ‘hard times’ and the like. If more mothers and fathers than ever before can afford to send their sons and daughters to the Ohio State University, the state itself can afford to balance the account by providing adequate teaching staff and facilities to take care of them.”\footnote{43 To put}
it mildly, their optimism was misplaced. Within four years, whether the threat was real or merely perceived, the University president would feel forced to declare officially that the university would remain open for the spring quarter.44

By the spring of 1931, Ohio State was already responding to its growing budgetary crisis by reducing the number of its teachers and lowering the salaries of those that remained. The dramatic reductions in state funding forced the university to make cuts in all areas of operation, eliminating numerous teaching, clerical, and maintenance positions. Specifically, the administration and trustees had to cut more than 100 faculty positions, leave vacant positions unfilled, and reduce remaining salaries of more than $3,000 by five to ten percent. President Rightmire and others immediately recognized the significance of these cuts as both harmful measures and as dangerous precedents. Rightmire reported to the governor that the university needed at least $2,500,000 more per biennium to “accomplish the reasonable purposes and results which may be expected from the institution,” arguing that the “University cannot even mark time but must certainly retrograde both with reference to its educational activities with students and also in a material way” under the existing appropriation.45

Rightmire was prescient. By December 1931, the university alumni publication cited a multitude of student protests as evidence that the budget cuts were “doing more far reaching injury than [officials] had feared.”46 Ohio State students reacted most visibly to the changes the new economy had brought to the university’s main library. Not only had the cloakroom closed, causing students to leave their books, hats, and jackets lying around on the floor and giving the library the “appearance of an ill-kept warehouse,” the library had cancelled its subscriptions to academic periodicals, denying students access to
materials necessary for their studies. This type of retrenchment inspired the transformation of the theme of a 1931 gathering of 68 alumni clubs from the traditional "Ohio State Day" to a "Mobilization Day" in support of the university. Although valuable and appreciated, the alumni's moral support was not enough to ward off further budget cuts and tough decisions.

In 1933 alone, the O.S.U. Board of Trustees announced the abolition of 236 university positions, the vast majority of them again coming from the university's teaching staff. The colleges of "agriculture, arts and sciences, commerce and administration, education, and engineering" lost 169 of the 184 sacrificed teaching positions. As a result of three stages of salary cuts, each more intrusive than the last, the university cut over $1,000,000 from a budget of $4,775,928 within four years. In total, the university president lost thirty-two percent of his salary; deans and department heads lost twenty-two percent, and other salaried employees lost between ten and nineteen percent of their income.

The university community responded to the Depression conditions by commissioning a "Committee on Courses, Activities and Program" in the summer of 1932. Unofficially known as the Klein Committee, after its chairperson Dr. Arthur J. Klein, this body recommended sweeping changes in OSU's structure in order to insure the school's survival and continued viability. One commentator responded to the Klein Committee's report with the grim and altogether accurate summary that, "the bitter medicine stage has been supplanted by amputation." The report recommended that the university discontinue completely 337 courses and offer 69 others only in alternate years. Moreover, the committee suggested combining 33 classes and reducing the frequency of
30 more. At the same time, the committee recognized the importance of keeping class sizes as small as possible to provide the best possible education despite the difficult circumstances.\textsuperscript{51}

Although sweeping in nature, the Klein Committee’s proposed cuts proved insufficient; financial realities mandated even a more severe curtailment of university offerings and programs than the Klein Committee recommended while class sizes continued to grow. President Rightmire reported to the Board of Trustees in 1934 that the university’s teaching staff was faltering under the strain of providing more classes to more students with fewer materials and assistants. He noted that, despite diminishing resources, “people do not expect less of the University under these conditions; indeed the urge to expand University Activities into new fields is constantly being pressed.”\textsuperscript{52}

Conditions began to improve O.S.U. in the late 1930s. After spending most of the decade in the “trough of a depression,” the university’s economic outlook brightened by the end of the decade.\textsuperscript{53} Although aided only slightly by state appropriations, O.S.U.’s total available income increased from $8,372,799 in 1937-38 to $10,230,341 in 1939-40. One historian of the university argued that by early 1938, when Governor Davey signed an additional appropriations bill giving OSU $429,000 in supplemental funds and president Rightmire announced his retirement, the “University was definitely over the Depression breakers.” Rightmire left the University in June 1938 knowing that OSU was, in his words, “nearer normal financing than at any time since the Depression had set in.”\textsuperscript{54}

The University of Maryland followed this same national pattern of retrenchment and survival. In 1931, when the governor demanded that the university return 15% of its
budget to the state treasury, the money came from the salary and equipment pools, and in 1933 the cycle repeated itself. Meanwhile, many state officials continued looking for other ways to cut back on the university’s appropriations. In a 1933 report, the “Committee Appointed by the President of the Senate of Maryland to Investigate the Affairs of the University of Maryland” reported that “salaries of deans, professors, assistant professors, and many other employees . . . are now on too high a basis and should be scaled down to present-day conditions.” The report also rejected the idea that the University of Maryland should pay its faculty and staff at the same rate as other land-grant institutions because the state government in Maryland also helped support other institutions whereas in some other states that was not the case.55

In total, the University of Maryland faculty salaries declined between 7.5 percent and 15 percent between the 1930-31 and 1935-36 academic years, and university officials never developed a plan for a systematic restoration of salaries. So, during these years, as the teaching load increased to almost twice the previous levels, as classes met in “conditions far from desirable—some class rooms being in the basements of old buildings,” and as their president showed no inclination to support them in their scholarly or teaching efforts, more of the teaching staff fled the university.56 According to one disgruntled (and former) professor the attrition was tremendous: more than 20 faculty members and administrators, including deans and department chairs, left the university under Pearson’s administration, even as enrollment almost doubled.57

At the University of California, the attrition rate was not quite as severe, although the difficulty in finding, and funding, enough full-time professors to carry out the university’s mission was comparable. While attendance at all UC campuses increased
almost fifty percent between 1929-30 and 1938, overall state support dropped below 1929 levels in 1933, and in 1938 the state’s support per student was barely more than seventy percent of what it had been only nine years earlier. In a refrain common to all university presidents during the Depression, the faculty and staff of the University of California were told to do more in terms of statewide service and instruction with lesser amounts of state funding.58

All members of the university community felt the effects of these “subnormal” budgets, and in response to loyalty questions Sproul went out of his way to emphasize the continued devotion of the faculty and students to the university in his reports to the governor. In 1932, Sproul revealed that the university’s faculty members and administrators had voluntarily allowed the university to withhold $300,000 from their paychecks and return the funds to the state treasury to help alleviate the general budget deficit. In his 1934 report, Sproul discussed the faculty salary situation in a section entitled, “Steadfast Loyalty of the Faculty.” In 1933, he had pointed out to university alumni that California’s average faculty salaries were far lower than those at U.C.B.’s peer institutions (including Michigan, Princeton, and Stanford) and in 1934, he told the governor that most faculty members had received a ten percent salary reduction and that many had received a twenty percent cut. He warned that “this necessary action in the face of rising prices and the fact that very few other State departments or activities have made any reductions whatever in salaries, is bound, if not corrected, to bring eventual heavy loses in the ranks of the able and highminded men whom we are most anxious to retain.” University comptroller, L. A. Nichols similarly explained to the alumni in 1933
that the large salary reductions were necessary to prevent the dismissal of more than the "fifty or sixty already removed." 59

Sproul had not exaggerated the hardships endured by the university's faculty and staff. In 1929, the average UC full professor made $5,459, and at the lowest point during the 1930s, the average salary for full professors was $4,902, in 1935. After 1936, the average full professor salary never receded below $5,100, and by 1941, the average was back up to $5,423, an almost full restoration of pre-Depression salaries. The same general trends occurred with the average salaries for assistant and associate professors and for instructors. Although the salaries for people holding these positions did not reach their nadir until 1937, the total decline in each case was less than ten percent, and by 1941 salaries had either surpassed or come within $30 of 1929 levels. Sproul also felt the pinch of the Depression in the lightening of his own wallet. He earned $15,000 as president in 1930-31, and this remained his salary until 1933-34, when it fell by 20 percent, to $12,000. His salary remained $12,000 for two years, after which Sproul had half of the reduction restored. After three years of earning $13,500, in 1938-39 Sproul enjoyed a complete restoration of his 1930-31 salary. 60

Like public universities everywhere he Berkeley campus also responded to the twin pressures of accommodating thousands of new students and maintaining existing and very high standards by trimming the ranks of its professors, assistant professors, and associate professors, and by adding large numbers of instructors and lecturers. During the academic year 1929-30, the Berkeley campus had 176 professors, 101 associate professors, 102 assistant professors, 36 instructors, and 60 lecturers. Although the number of assistant professors declined to 89 by 1931-32, the other categories remained
relatively stable. However, by 1934-35, the forced reliance on instructors was becoming evident, as their total had almost doubled to 67. Writing in 1938, President Sproul argued that the University’s continued reliance upon instructors was “not conducive to the maintenance of standards.” He continued, explaining that this reliance could “only be a temporary expedient” because UC protocol required instructors employed for more than a few years to gain promotion in salary and rank. Moreover, if the university did not follow its procedures and promote the instructors, “the capable men resign; only the less capable remain. This type of deterioration,” Sproul cautioned the governor, “will become serious unless additional funds can be promptly supplied.” Nonetheless, despite Sproul’s dire predictions, by 1939-40, while the ranks of Berkeley professors had swollen to 234, with 132 associate professors and 100 assistant professors, there were also 83 instructors and 65 lecturers conducting classes. This was an improvement over the 1930 numbers, but the increase was still in no way proportional to the growth in the student population.61

Like all public universities, the University of California coped with its funding difficulties by cutting back while trying to preserve the university’s essential core and continue fulfilling its mission. This was never an easy task, but a new source of unds lightened the load by the middle years of the 1930s.

If the universities could not count on their respective state legislatures to provide sufficient resources for the maintenance and expansion of their institutions, they could at least turn to a newly important source of funding, the New Deal agencies of the federal government. At Ohio State, as it became clearer that the university could not rely on the state legislature for adequate support of itself or its students, president Rightmire and
others began looking to the federal government for aid. In early 1934, Rightmire requested more than $67,000 in federal loans to create jobs for students unable to attend Ohio State without them. In his June 1934 report to the Trustees and the Governor, Rightmire introduced sections entitled “Federal Aid for Students Through Part-Time Employment” and “Government Assistance Through C.W.A., F.E.R.A., P.W.A., and C.W.S.” He explained that 1,272 students had found part-time jobs financed with federal loans and that federal money had made possible much of the facilities maintenance that the state could not afford. This aid, consisting of loans and grants totaling well over $100,000, supported landscaping projects around the Olentangy River, the remodeling of the university armory, the cleaning, washing, and painting of university buildings’ interior and exterior walls, as well as the construction of additional university dormitories. This dormitory construction included the creation of dorm rooms within the existing football stadium structure, an addition Rightmire characterized as “not only an economical utilization of the stadium structure” but one that also had “the greatest social significance; it is deeply appreciated by the people of Ohio.”

Fortunately for its administrators and students, during the middle and late 1930s, the University of California could also look to federal government agencies, particularly the N.Y.A. and the W.P.A. for financial support. In 1939, president Sproul summarized the importance of this assistance, writing “had it not been for the timely aid of the Federal Government through the N.Y.A. the University would certainly not have discharged its teaching and public service responsibilities as successfully as it has.” According to Sproul, the N.Y.A. had provided more than 500,000 hours of employment for students at all seven branches of the University of California, and the N.Y.A. had also provided the
university's branches with more than 1,000,000 hours of labor that "facilitat[ed] the
general operation of the institution." By spending more than $200,000 on the seven
campuses to provide file clerks, library workers, and research assistants, among other
workers, the N.Y.A. had allowed both the student body and the university to get through
many lean spots.63

However important the N.Y.A. had been to the University, its sister New Deal
program, the W.P.A. was even more helpful to the University of California as its leaders
focused more than other institutions on continuing research programs. The W.P.A.'s
money for research projects allowed professors, whose "active and original minds found
themselves in a ceaseless round of classroom routine," to pursue ambitious projects
otherwise impossible to fund. The W.P.A. spent $750,000 on research activities in one
year alone, amounting to approximately two million working hours over a two-year
period. Throughout the decade, the University of California consistently defended to the
public and the alumni the value of "pure" research, and the W.P.A. allowed many faculty
members to continue with their vital work. This institutional investment in faculty
research paid off handsomely in 1939 when Professor Ernest O. Lawrence won the Nobel
Prize for Physics for his work with the cyclotron.64

Evidence from the University of Texas highlights the fact that the nation's
universities looked to the federal government for aid before the creation of the New Deal
agencies, but that the amount of assistance grew greatly under the Roosevelt
administration. For example, in late 1932 U.T.A. president Benedict asked the
university's investment statistician, C. D. Simmons, to investigate the lending conditions
imposed by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to see if the "terms [are] onerous or
could we never pay back and get out of jail, etc., etc., etc.?* Simmons confessed that he had "been concentrating such energy ... on University funds invested in other people's projects" that he had devoted no time to "getting them to invest money in ours."

Simmons explained to Benedict that the university would probably be justified in asking for RFC money to build dormitories because the dormitories could, in theory, meet the criterion of paying for themselves over the next 20 years. Whether they actually would or not, Simmons wrote, was "somewhat beside the point when the building achieves one of the purposes of the act in giving work to unemployed." Benedict and the university continued petitioning for federal funds to help finance building projects. By December 1936 the Public Works Administration alone had loaned U.T.A. $1,867,000 and had granted the school $931,500.65

Once again, it is important to note the importance of personal connection and interests within large, impersonal institutions and agencies. During the most trying times of the mid-1930s, the University of Tennessee also looked to New Deal programs for help, just as the federal government looked to the university for assistance in administering the Tennessee Valley Authority (T.V.A.). The university's personable president, Harcourt A. Morgan, during the late 1920s and early 1930s was one of the country's leading experts on the Tennessee valley region. As such, he was an obvious choice to help run the T.V.A. The university gave Morgan a one-year leave of absence in 1933, and in August 1934, he left his university position for a permanent job with the T.V.A. At the same time, the Roosevelt administration had many reasons, in addition to the general humanitarian ones, to grant federal aid to the state of Tennessee. Roosevelt's secretary of state, Cordell Hull, hailed from Tennessee, and probably more importantly,
Tennessee was not as solidly Democratic as most other Southern states. In other words, partly to prevent Tennessee from returning to the Republican fold as it had in the 1928 presidential election, Roosevelt’s New Deal was very generous to Tennessee.\textsuperscript{67}

Even with such strong state and institutional connections to the federal government and federal agencies, the University of Tennessee failed to take full advantage of the potential government aid. Helped by the fact that the main WPA administrator for Tennessee was also a trustee of the university, U.T.K. received well over $300,000 in W.P.A. funds to pay for labor costs in construction projects. However, the cautious attitude of university president Hoskins and limited university resources severely restricted U.T.K.’s ability to benefit from P.W.A. and other government projects. Since the P.W.A. required petitioners to provide 55 percent of the necessary funds, to which the federal government would match 45 percent, to take full advantage of the program U.T.K. would have had to come up with substantial sums on its own. In most cases university officials could not do so.\textsuperscript{68} According to James Montgomery, in 1938 Tennessee “stood last among southern states for the amount of PWA money appropriated to colleges and universities,” having received only $166,909 while Louisiana collected $4,675,272 and North Carolina, $2,357,618.\textsuperscript{69}

Like other American schools, the University of Tennessee used the federal money it did receive to improve the physical facilities of the main campus and to employ students in various research and construction projects. Using C.W.A. funds, Knoxville. students labored to preserve manuscript collections, collect sociological data on the residents of the Tennessee Valley, clean library bookshelves, surface tennis courts, and paint the interiors and exteriors of buildings, among other tasks. The university also used
W.P.A. money to add onto the football stadium, twice, not only adding seats, but like Ohio State, also adding residential rooms in the form of R.O.T.C. barracks, in the stadium’s interior.  

With its proximity to the nation’s capital, the University of Maryland at College Park was the state university best situated to take advantage of federal largess during the Great Depression, and the institution capitalized on its location and on its leaders’ personal relationships with the federal officials to help finance an amazing building program during the 1930s. Throughout the decade, federal programs added greatly to the university’s landscape and to the budgets of the university and its students. As Callcott noted, in an era of lavish federal spending on colleges and universities, “great leeway remained for a politically astute university administration to cash in on the wide range of opportunities.” Byrd was, if anything, politically astute. The University not only benefited from the annual $100,000 for agricultural work granted by the Bankhead-Jones Act of 1935, it also profited from Byrd’s political connections and acumen. Byrd got the Civilian Conservation Corps to establish a regional headquarters at College Park, and also landed a $50,000 grant for campus landscaping from the agency. In 1936, a U.M. administrator wrote to the Baltimore administrator of the N.Y.A., telling him “that the aid rendered to students under the National Youth Administration has been a great benefit to the students, and has helped many to secure education who otherwise would not have received it.” At one point, more than twenty percent of U.M. students worked for the N.Y.A., helping their university just as the federal government helped them.  

The federal programs certainly helped the university as an institution survive the depression equally as much as they did the students. Benefiting primarily from the
P.W.A. and the W.P.A., the University of Maryland ultimately received approximately $3,000,000 for campus building projects, easily one of the largest totals given to a university. This was not coincidental but rather the product of location and clever politics. For example, at one point in 1938, the generally conservative Democrat president Byrd met secretly with president Roosevelt, and shortly thereafter the university received even more than the $1,000,000 Byrd had requested from the federal government. Not coincidently, a few months later, Byrd spoke out against the reelection campaign of Millard E. Tydings, one of his university’s most loyal supporters, a personal friend of Byrd, and a vocal opponent of the New Deal. After Roosevelt’s congressional purge attempts failed, Byrd quickly reconciled with his former classmate and continued to work successfully with Tydings to get the university more money from the federal coffers.  

The influx of federal money and a slowly recovering national economy helped the nation’s public universities return to somewhat normal operating procedures by the late 1930s. Although officials at the University of California still referred to the 1938-1940 period as “one of the most difficult in the history of the University,” most other university leaders by that point seemed relieved to have survived the worst of the Depression with their institutions intact. The year 1938 saw Ohio State officials noting that they had exited the “trough of a depression;” that same year Tennessee voters elected a new governor who would push for increased university appropriations and who would work with a legislature that was more willing to support the state’s main university. Meanwhile, the combination of Byrd’s optimistic personality, large gifts, and federal
funds delivered optimism to the University of Maryland campus, and by 1937 the University of Texas had been able to restore most of its salaries to the pre-Depression levels. By the late 1930s, most American public university officials recognized that the worst was over, and that the universities would emerge strengthened and intact.

While evident in many places by the late 1930s, this confidence had not always been there. It is important to note the very real difficulties these universities faced and the dramatic measures their leaders took in order to continue operations. During most of the 1930s, facing geometric growth in student populations and gutted budgets, the universities looked to the federal government for help to prevent further cuts in staff positions, teachers’ salaries, library subscriptions, and the numbers of classes and degree programs offered. There was a genuine sense of crisis on American campuses during the 1930s, but despite the determination of most universities to present themselves as cost-effective educators, as essential, non-frivolous agencies, the primary area that did not suffer dramatic cuts in operations and that certainly never truly confronted cancellation was the universities’ athletic program. The next chapters will explain how, despite a very real sense of financial and social crisis, a complex combination of institutional, political, ideological, communal, and commercial values worked to preserve and protect the athletic operations of American public universities during the Depression, just as they worked to protect the universities themselves.

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1 David O. Levine wrote that “American higher education fared better than most social institutions during the Depression. The value of higher education was rarely questioned . . . In the face of adversity, then, American higher education consolidated and even strengthened its position in modern American society.” See Levine, The American College and the Culture of Aspiration, 1915-1940 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 185. Levine also noted that the Depression shook “the confidence of American higher education;” he continued, “though few colleges closed their doors in the 1930s, many were plagued by the constant fear of impending financial disaster.” See page 186.


Donald W. Whisenhunt, *The Depression in Texas: The Hoover Years*, (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc.,1983), 105; John A. Douglass advanced an argument similar to Whisenhunt’s. Discussing the University of California’s enrollment trends, Douglass noted, “State government experienced a significant decline in revenues and proceeded to make massive cuts in public education funding. At the same time, a weak employment market for high school graduates increased the attractiveness of a college education.” John A. Douglass. “Californians and Public Higher Education: Political Culture, Educational Opportunity and State Policymaking,” *History Of Higher Education Annual* (16) 1996: 82; H. Y. Benedict to E. A. Burnett, 17 December 1936, (“Questionnaires, Sept 1, 1936-,” VF 18/A.a), University of Texas President Office Records, 1907-1968, CAH, UTA. University of Texas president Harry Benedict responded to a 1935 letter from a friend looking for a job in this way, “Such a swarm of job applications surround me all the time that I am forced to urge almost anybody to hold on like grim death to any job they happen to have.” H. Y. Benedict to Jonnie Fay Ashby, 26 March 1935, (“‘A’ Correspondence,” 2B59), Benedict Papers, CAH, UTA.

Stadtman, *Centennial History*, 221-222.


A poor old Country Boy, unknown, to H. Y. Benedict, E. J. Matthews, and Dr. Parlin, 18 September, 1931, (“Office of President, 1929-1932.” VF 4/D.a.), University of Texas President’s Office Records, 1907-1968, CAH, UTA.

“Press Release: ‘For Release to Morning Papers of Sunday, November, 1936.’” (“Correspondence, Addresses, October, 1934-April, 1936,” 2B59), Harry Y. Benedict Papers, Office of the President, CAH, UTA.

“Press Release: ‘For Release to Morning Papers of Sunday, November, 1936.’” (“Correspondence, Addresses, October, 1934-April, 1936,” 2B59), Harry Y. Benedict Papers, Office of the President, CAH, UTA.


“Summary of General Budgets, The University of Texas, Distributed to Faculty at Budge Meeting, June 17, 1931,” (“Office of the President—Miscellaneous, 1932-34,” VF 4/D.a). University of Texas President’s Office Records, 1907-1968, CAH, UTA. The cost-of-living calculations were done using the website http://www.westegg.com/inflation/ It explains its methodology by explaining that “the pre-1975 data are


14 *Report of the President of the University of California, 1930-1932,* 7-8.

15 *Report of the President of the University of California, 1930-1932,* 8.

16 *University of California Budget for 1929-30,* 3; *University of California Budget for 1930-31,* 3; *University of California Budget for 1931-32,* 3; *University of California Budget for 1932-32,* 3; quotes from *Report of the President of the University of California, 1930-32,* 36; *University of California Budget for 1933-34,* 3; *University of California Budget for 1934-35,* 3; *University of California Budget for 1935-36,* 3; *University of California Budget for 1936-37,* 3; *University of California Budget for 1937-38,* 1; *University of California Budget for 1938-39,* 1; and *University of California Budget for 1939-40,* 1.

17 *Report of the President of the University of California, 1936-38,* 1, 3, 5; *Report of the President of the University of California, 1938-1940,* 1.

18 Montgomery, *Threshold of a New Day,* 90, 92, 94.

19 J. J. Walker to Dr. H. A. Morgan 21 February 1933, ("X. Budget and Finances—C. Annual Budgets—9. 1931-31," AR-1, box 3), President’s Papers, 1867-1954, University of Tennessee Special Collections, Hoskins Library, Knoxville; deflation statistics are from http://www.westegg.com/inflation; *Orange and White* (Knoxville), 3 November 1931; Montgomery, *Threshold of a New Day,* 95, 97.


21 Minutes of the Annual Meeting, Board of Trustees, the University of Tennessee, December 3, 1938: Budget director Henry Burke’s quote is found on Montgomery, *Threshold of a New Day,* 119.

22 Examples of these letters abound in the President’s Papers files related to budgets. For specific examples see J. J. Walker to C. M. Preston, Knoxville, 20 December 1932, and J. J. Walker to H. A. Morgan, 10 April 1933, in ("X. Budget and Finances—C. Annual Budgets—9. 1931-31," AR-1, box 3), President’s Papers, 1867-1954, SC, UTK.


25 Minutes of the Annual Meeting, Board of Trustees, the University of Tennessee, December 3, 1938: Budget director Henry Burke’s quote is found on Montgomery, *Threshold of a New Day,* 119.

26 Montgomery, *Threshold of a New Day,* 120-121. In the segregated South of the 1930s, the Democratic Party was often the only political party of real significance and power; therefore, winning the Democratic primary was tantamount to winning the general election because few serious challenges arose from outside the Democratic Party. However, in Tennessee the situation was slightly different because East Tennessee has traditionally been predominantly Republican. Nonetheless, as one scholar has noted about 1930s Tennessee politics, “The Republican vote, concentrated in east Tennessee, was insufficient to threaten
Democratic control of the governorship. The candidate who amassed the approximately 150,000 votes necessary to win the Democratic primary became governor of Tennessee.” Candidates with the support of Memphis’s political boss, Edward Crump, needed only 100,000 additional votes because Crump could guarantee 50,000. Bergeron, et. al, *Tennesseans and Their History*, 273.


28 “Education Will Solve South’s Problem says President,” 3.

29 Montgomery, *Threshold of a New Day*, 120-121.


31 Callcott, *History of the University of Maryland*, 299-304, also 284. Callcott wrote that Pearson “lack[ed] an educational philosophy” and that he did not want to do anything “with a university besides keep it running, and such an attitude on the part of an academic administrator is likely to be disastrous.” See *History of the University of Maryland*, 299.

32 Callcott, *History of the University of Maryland*, 299; “Annual Income for Educational Purposes From State and Federal Appropriations and Other Sources,” (“Statement of Income By Years 1920-21 to 1935-36 Inclusive, University of Maryland and State Board of Agriculture, Office of Comptroller, November 17, 1936,” Series 8, Box S1), ACC 94-85, Records of the President’s Office, Unprocessed, SC, UML; Callcott, *History of the University of Maryland*, 300; “Annual Income for Educational Purposes From State and Federal Appropriations and Other Sources;” “Annual Income From State and Federal Appropriations and Other Sources for Educational Purposes based on a One Hundred Dollar Unit,” (“Statement of Income By Years 1920-21 to 1935-36 Inclusive, University of Maryland and State Board of Agriculture, Office of Comptroller, November 17, 1936,” Series 8, Box S1), ACC 94-85, Records of the President’s Office, Unprocessed, SC, UML; “Average Annual Income Per Student From State and Federal Appropriations and Other Sources for Educational Purposes.” (“Statement of Income By Years 1920-21 to 1935-36 Inclusive, University of Maryland and State Board of Agriculture, Office of Comptroller, November 17, 1936.” Series 8, Box S1), ACC 94-85, Records of the President’s Office, Unprocessed, SC, UML.

33 Callcott, *History of the University of Maryland*, 300. Some professors complained publicly about the state of the state’s university, arguing that “a building program is a laudable thing, and highly to be commended, but it should always be strictly secondary to the real university, the association of faculty and students in enthusiastic devotion to learning.” *Washington Post* editorials stated that since the appointment of Pearson, “a gathering cloud of criticism has appeared over College Park and the university’s position has lowered appreciably” and that a “snappy R.O.T.C., triple-threat full backs and elaborate landscaping have superseded considerations of classroom and laboratory.” Even the student newspaper, the *Diamondback*, published editorials critical of Pearson, and the Board of Regents finally listened to this rising chorus and investigated the various charges. After 49 of the 55 professors answering an anonymous questionnaire indicated that they had no confidence in the Pearson administration the Board and demanded and received his resignation in 1935. See Callcott, *History of the University of Maryland*, 303; A.E. Zucker, “The Real Issue at the University of Maryland,” *Washington Post*, 16 May 1935; “Terrapins in Scholarship,” *Washington Post*, 7 May 1935; Callcott, *History of the University of Maryland*, 311.

34 Callcott, *History of the University of Maryland*, 313-319. As Callcott explained, it would be hard to overemphasize the importance of Byrd to the University of Maryland. He helped found the intramural program and the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference. He picked and named the university mascot, lent his own name to the football stadium, and helped create the alumni board. See Callcott, *History of the University of Maryland*, 321 for more details.

35 Callcott, *History of the University of Maryland*, 323-324.
“Meeting of the Board of Regents, 19 May 1933,” (Book 3, Series 4, Box 1); “Meeting of the Board of Regents, 22 April 1935,” (Book 3, Series 4, Box 1); “Meeting of the Board of Regents, 19 March 1937,” (Book 4, Series 4, Box 2); “Meeting of the Board of Regents, 29 September 1937,” (Book 4, Series 4, Box 2); Callicott, *History of the University of Maryland*, 328; H.C. Byrd to Charles T. Woolent, 16 November 1937. (“H.C. Byrd, 1937-44,” Series 1, Box 1), Papers of Geary Eppley, SC, UML.

“Meeting of the Board of Regents, 21 May 1939,” Book 5, Series 4, Box 2; “Meeting of the Board of Regents, 26 May 1939,” Book 5, Series 4, Box 2; “Meeting of the Board of Regents, 20 October 1939, Book 5, Series 4, Box 2;” Meeting of the Board of Regents, 21 June 1940,” Book 5, Series 4, Box 2.


Judging from one table attached to the above-cited “Exhibit A,” many, if not all, of the exemptions went to professors in the medical sciences.

Again, even after taking considerable deflation into account, the cuts were damaging. According to http://westegg.com/inflation/ $100 in 1935 was worth $129.45 in 1928. So, although the real value of money had increased almost 30 percent, that still did not offset the almost 60 percent in decline in per student spending. See again, Friedman, *The Inflation Calculator*, available online: <http://www.westegg.com/inflation/>, [15 August 2001].


“Reasons for Salary Changes,” (“Office of the President, 1936-37,” VF 4/D.a), University of Texas President’s Office Records, 1907-1968, CAH, UTA.

*The Ohio State University Monthly* 22 (October 1930): 2.

*The Ohio State University Monthly* 24 (February 1933): 145.

“The University History Series: Decade of 1930-1940—Weathering the Depression,” *The Ohio State University Monthly* 40 (April 1949); 28; George Rightmire, “Annual Report of the President. “ *Sixty-Second Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Ohio State University to the Governor of Ohio, for the Year Ending June 30, 1931* (Columbus: The Ohio State University), 1931, 22; “University History Series: Decade of 1930-1940—Weathering the Depression,” 28; quotes from pages 22 and 23, respectively, in George Rightmire, “Annual Report of the President,” *Sixty-Second Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Ohio State University to the Governor of Ohio, for the Year Ending June 30, 1931.*

*The Ohio State University Monthly* 23 (December 1931): 93.

“The Ohio State University Monthly” 23 (December 1931): 93.

“University History Series: Decade of 1930-1940—Weathering the Depression,” 29.
Academic Year 1933-34 statistics are from Sixty-Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Ohio State University to the Governor of Ohio, for the Year Ending June 30, 1934, 39-42; John B. Fullen, "University Trims Sails," The Ohio State University Monthly 25 (October 1931): 3-4.

Pollard, History of the Ohio State University, 309; quote from The Ohio State University Monthly 24 (February 1933): 145.


Sixty-Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Ohio State University to the Governor of Ohio, for the Year Ending June 30, 1934, 37-38.

Quote from Sixty-Eighth Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Ohio State University to the Governor of Ohio, for the Year Ending June 30, 1938, 10.

Budget information from 1936-37 is from Sixty-Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Ohio State University to the Governor of Ohio, for the Year Ending June 30, 1937, 122-125; budget information from 1939-40 is from Seventieth Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Ohio State University to the Governor of Ohio, for the Year Ending June 30, 1940, 14-18; both quotes and all information are from “University History Series: Decade of 1930-1940—Weathering the Depression.”

Callcott, History of the University of Maryland, 302 and 303; “Report of Committee Appointed by President of the Senate of Maryland to Investigate the Affairs of the University of Maryland,” 16 February 1933, 9-10, (“Legislative Investigation [1933],” Series 7, Box 20), ACC 94-85. Records of the President’s Office, SC, UML. Quote on page 9.


Callcott, History of the University of Maryland, 303.

“Comparison of Enrollment and State Support, University of California-All Campuses.” Report of the President of the University of California, 1936-38, 16.

Report of the President of the University of California, 1930-32, 8; Report of the President of the University of California, 1932-34, 16; Stadtman, The University of California, 1868-1968, 259; Report of the President of the University of California, 1932-34, 16; The California Monthly 31 (October 1933): 27.

Stadtman, Centennial Record, 264; Sproul’s salary statistics come from University of California Budget for the years 1929-1940. His salary information is on page 20 of the budgets for 1930-32 and on page 22 of the budgets for 1933-40.

Quotes from Report of the President of the University of California, 1936-38, 14.

Report of the President of the University of California, 1936-38, 18.

Report of the President of the University of California, 1936-38, 18; The California Monthly, 36 (June, 1936).

H. Y. Benedict to C. D. Simmons, 28 November 1932, ("LT Buildings Erected With Federal Aid," VF 15/D.B), University of Texas President's Office Records, 1907-1968, CAH, UTA.


Montgomery, Threshold of a New Day, 104-108; Bergeron, Tennesseans and Their History, 260.

Montgomery, Threshold of a New Day, 128-130.

Montgomery, Threshold of a New Day, 129.

List of C.W.A. projects, ("XII. Civil Works Administration (1933-1935)." AR-1, Box 4), President's Papers, 1867-1954, SC, UTK; Montgomery, Threshold of a New Day, 130. The University of Tennessee built these new dormitories despite the vigorous opposition of the Dean of Students. F. M. Massey. Massey wrote to president Hoskins in January 1938 to "vigorously assert that it [was] not fair to sacrifice the welfare of students to help pay for a new stadium." Massey based his argument on the assumption that "any institution that builds a dormitory for men or women with any other objective than the maximum cultural service to the students involved is breaking faith not only with the present student body but with those that are to come." Despite Massey's objections, the university trustees continued the project and made the additions to the stadium and to the number of available rooms for students. See F. M. Massey to James D. Hoskins, 17 January 1938, (Folder "No. 12 (2), Stadium project, 1938-40." Box 2), Tennessee "Business Manager... , 1932-52," University Papers, SC, UTK.

Callcott, History of the University of Maryland, 325; Geary Eppley to Ryland N. Dempster, 7 May 1936, ("National Youth Administration, 1936," Series 1, Box 7), Papers of Geary Eppley, SC, UML; Callcott, History of the University of Maryland, 325.

Callcott, History of the University of Maryland, 325-326
"College athletics in general and football in particular, still suffering somewhat from the growing pains of super-salesmanship and ballyhoo, have been abruptly brought to face with somewhat critical conditions for 1931." The New York Times, 1931

"The financial problems which face the average college or university athletic department are enough to tax the combined brains of a banker, a sales manager, and a corps of accountants . . . Some of us are unfortunately saddled with stadia and athletic buildings erected during a time when buildings sprang up like magic everywhere, and when no capacity in athletic plants, however large, seemed sufficient." K. L. Wilson, Northwestern University, 1933

"A very large percentage of colleges have had their athletic income reduced. In spite of this, and the most remarkable part of it to this writer, is the fact that we have been able to keep our athletic programs almost intact. Very few colleges have abolished sports. They are to be congratulated. It is an unwise policy to eliminate. If something must be done it is far better to modify." C. E. Bilheimer, Gettysburg College, 1933.

The athletic components of American public universities featured great differences in scope and scale, even among the most prominent athletic powers. For
example, the primary state universities of California and Ohio belonged to the biggest of the "Big Time" athletic supporters, since their officials had come to expect in the 1920s annual football receipts of hundreds of thousands of dollars. Meanwhile, other state universities, such as the Universities of Texas and Tennessee made do with smaller but still significant revenues during the same period. Finally, at yet another level of "Big Time" athletics resided less lucrative athletic programs; the University of Maryland, for example, operated its athletic teams with considerably less money than its richer counterparts. In spite of these differences in scale, the problems each school faced were remarkably similar. The onset of the Depression brought declining revenues, a changing cost structure, and a growing commercial orientation to all levels of men's collegiate athletics.¹

After a decade of great expansion, both physically and fiscally, the shockwave of the early Depression years threatened to destroy all that prosperity and planning had built. However, despite the onset of a national economic crisis, one that debilitated American public universities equally as much as it did other large institutions, men's intercollegiate athletic programs survived virtually intact. If by the end of the decade they had regained their audiences and their solvency, it was primarily due to the fact that throughout the decade their football teams had retained their profitability, if not necessarily their profit margins. Despite mounting losses and dim hopes for an immediate financial recovery, most American universities did almost anything they could to preserve their intercollegiate programs in an effort to provide athletic opportunities for all male students.
American public universities made their choices within certain value structures, structures that included professional, ideological, political, and gender components. In the end, the institution of American intercollegiate athletics persevered for a variety of reasons, reasons that were as much ideological and cultural as they were financial. While later chapters address the ideological and social/cultural supports of intercollegiate athletics, this one examines the economics of “big time” athletics and the patterns of responses to the financial challenges of the 1930s. First, extravagant spending on physical facilities of the 1920s limited the number of options available to the universities during the 1930s, their cost helping to insure that athletic programs would survive the lean years of the early 1930s. A form of institutional inertia had set in: given the facilities, it was easier for administrators to keep the programs than discard them. Second, during this period the classification of “big time athletics” encompassed an extremely wide range of programs and universities, but in all “big time” institutions, football remained the cornerstone of the program and the main provider for the budget. Although football would become much less profitable during the 1930s and much less able to support “minor” sports programs, in most places it did remain profitable. A third pattern was that when confronted with red ink, athletic officials became even less concerned with the “commercialization” of athletics and more concerned with the continuation of them, relying upon football revenue in general and “big game” revenue in particular to sustain their programs. By the end of the 1930s, contrary to reformers’ wishes, university leaders were treating college athletics more like a business rather than less like one.
The 1920s were a "golden age" for college football programs, whose popularity exploded enormously. With the expansion in numbers and scale came increasing athletic revenues. During that decade, as attendance doubled and income tripled, American colleges and universities inaugurated an athletic building boom. In 1920, only Yale could seat more than 70,000 in its campus football stadium; by 1930, more than seven schools could, most of them in the Midwest and the West, including both Ohio State and the University of California. Many of these institutions reaped great financial rewards from their athletic programs. For example, in the 1920s, the University of Alabama gained $150,000 from intercollegiate athletics in one year, most of which came from football revenues. Harvard University's football team produced $429,000 and supported the rest of the school's athletic programs, still leaving a profit of $131,000. The University of Washington's athletic programs produced $230,000 and cost the university $192,000, producing a profit of $38,000. Finally, epitomizing the excess of 1920s college athletics, the Yale University Athletic Association produced a profit of $348,500 in 1927-28, out of a gross income of $1,119,000. Although certainly not all universities conducted athletics on such a profitable or grand scale, the groundswell of support for men's intercollegiate athletics, especially football, at all levels throughout the 1920s inspired athletic officials to borrow great sums of money to finance construction in order to meet the actual and anticipated demand.

The golden age, however, ended rather abruptly with the dawn of the new decade, and America's universities had to address the twin problems of declining revenue and increased commitments. American universities shared the burdens of paying off the debt from the previous decade's building spree, and many also felt compelled to continue
building new facilities during the 1930s as college enrollment increased. Having made large physical and institutional commitments to athletics during the 1920s, American university officials (especially those with their jobs on the line) were reluctant to retrench during the hard times of the 1930s. Most schools made cutbacks, some in the numbers of "minor" programs offered, almost all in the numbers of games played and trips taken by the minor sports teams. Although these universities continued to rely upon football as the one sport that enabled the schools to fund and offer the others, during the early years of the 1930s football revenue declined precipitously, even though at many places attendance levels remained relatively stable.

Most American public universities were eager and willing participants in the athletic building boom of the 1920s; a large number of them built, or committed to building new stadiums or gymnasiums during the decade with the understanding that the profits reaped during the 1920s would continue to pour into the university’s coffers. Officials would quickly learn that this assumption lacked foundation and would spend much of the 1930s fighting to keep their men’s athletic programs operational and to return them to financial stability. Their experience in the 1930s stood in stark contrast to that of the preceding decade. In 1933, a Northwestern professor reminded the attendees of the College Physical Education Association meeting of the good old days when “it was almost impossible to spend the income that came pouring in.” An Ohio State professor similarly recalled the 1920s as a time when the football team generated more money than the athletic department could spend without expanding facilities; so build they did.³

The University of California and Ohio State University represented the upper end of the national spending spectrum, building two to the largest football stadiums in the
country during the 1920s, with the University of California dedicated the 76,000-seat California Memorial Stadium in 1923. With one year’s athletic income totaling $486,162, more than $450,000 of it coming from football, and with athletic profits that year exceeding $170,000, U.C.B. was able to pay off most of its massive debt three years ahead of schedule, by 1930, with pledges in place to cover the rest of the debt. In the early 1930s, California administrators recommitted themselves to creating a more expansive recreation plant. Using money lent by the Regents and to be repaid out of athletic revenues and student fees, the University paid $1,400,000 for three city blocks of land adjacent to campus, intending to build football and baseball practice fields, a 25,000 seat track and field stadium, a new gymnasium, intramural sports fields, tennis courts, handball courts, and others recreational facilities.

Even in the prosperous “Golden Age,” Berkeley officials realized the need to achieve stability in the school’s athletic revenues. Anticipating coming events, the general manager of the Associated Students of the University of California (the A.S.U.C. was the body that oversaw athletics at U.C.B.), W. W. Monahan, argued in February 1930 that the university’s athletic situation was not as rosy as it appeared. Monahan explained that playing five postseason or intersectional football games within the previous six years had produced an extra $275,000 for the A.S.U.C., but he did not believe that the university should or could continue to rely on these irregular income infusions to balance the ledger books. In fact, Monahan noted that over the same six year span, the A.S.U.C. had had to borrow each year between $75,000 and $80,000 simply to continue operations the spring and summer. Monahan fervently hoped that “we will within the next few years place ourselves in a position where this will not be necessary.”
His wishes would not be granted in the early 1930s, and the University of California resumed its athletic plant expansion by the later years of the decade.

During the 1920s Ohio State joined California in the construction of an enormous, on-campus football stadium. In the late 1910s, after a series of very successful football seasons, Ohio State officials and supporters perceived a demand for a much larger football stadium than then existed in Columbus. In 1920, the university began a massive fund-raising campaign financed by athletic profits, soliciting gift and "stadium subscriptions" from students and faculty members, from alumni and friends in Columbus and far away. By early 1921, devotees of the university had pledged more than $1,000,000 to a stadium fund, and the university accepted a $1,341,000 bid on the stadium construction. The trustees placed all responsibility for the stadium in the hands of the Athletic Board, with the stipulation that the university itself would not have any financial obligations and that the stadium would cost no more than $930,000. Unfortunately for the Athletic Board, the final cost of the stadium was almost twice what the trustees had approved.

In late 1927, after spending more than $800,000 in athletic revenues on the stadium's construction, the Athletic Board turned over to the university an athletic plant including 46 new tennis courts, new walking and running tracks, baseball fields, intramural fields, and additions to the stadium worth $1,900,000. The trustees accepted this gift with great gratitude and with the expectation that the Athletic Board would be responsible for all remaining financial obligations. However, with the onset of the Depression it became clear that many of the stadium subscribers would not be able to fulfill their pledges. In 1936, the Athletic Board finally officially recognized that it would...
never see the $165,000 still owed by subscribers and finally closed the books on the stadium project. 

Ohio State also committed itself in the late 1920s to building many other athletic facilities, including a men’s gymnasium, a natatorium, a golf course, and a new field house. By 1931, the university had begun work on all but the field house, but as an athletic department report puts it, “the depression caused a sudden and complete change of circumstances.” The university had utilized $550,000 in state funding to construct the men’s gymnasium, but it had to rely upon its own resources for the remainder of the projects. The board had in the early 1930s, “in anticipation of surplus receipts,” borrowed a grand total of $310,000 to build the natatorium, but these surpluses did not materialize. For several years the Athletic Board could pay only the interest on its financial obligations for the golf course and the natatorium. Finally, in 1936, with promise of substantial assistance from the W.P.A., the university was able to continue its construction of the golf course, completing it in 1939 with a total expenditure of athletic revenue exceeding $360,000.

Although the expenditures of the University of California and Ohio State were much greater than most other American universities, the building programs at the Universities of Texas, Tennessee, and Maryland illustrate that these five universities all participated in a national movement. For example, the University of Texas Athletic Council moved in 1929 to build a new gymnasium and new locker buildings for the football and track teams at the football stadium, one that could hold 42,000 spectators. That same year the University of Tennessee loaned more than $120,000 to its Athletic
Association to refinance one debt and to finance additions to the football stadium, bringing its seating capacity to more than 30,000.\textsuperscript{12}

In the late 1920s the relatively young and small University of Maryland also joined in the national athletic construction boom, adding new stands for its athletic fields and proposing many more improvements. After finishing construction of a new 1,500 seat baseball stadium, a new track, and new tennis courts, in February of 1930, the Maryland Board of Regents granted a request made jointly by the student government association and the university’s Athletic Board to launch yet another wave of athletic construction projects. Instituting a $10 student activity fee to finance the projects, the Regents approved spending $105,000 on a host of additional facilities. A breathless correspondent for the \textit{Maryland Alumni News} informed his readers of the good news: “Great strides have been made in the last two years and when the proposed field house, revamped concrete stands, swimming pool, golf course, and some additional recreational spots are provided, the Old Line University will have the best all-around athletic plant in the South.”\textsuperscript{13} In May of 1931, the Regents authorized spending an additional $140,000, $120,000 to come from athletic bonds and $20,000 from the state legislature, on a men’s field house as well. The January 1932 dedication of the new field house, its prestige enhanced by the attendance of the governor and other dignitaries, produced more banner headlines on the front page of the alumni publication.\textsuperscript{14} This commitment to athletic construction developed all across the nation during the 1920s and early 1930s, and the erection of these prominent and expensive facilities made it virtually impossible for schools to jettison their intercollegiate athletic programs, even if they had wanted to do so.\textsuperscript{15}
Other dramatic headlines of the early 1930s called attention to less favorable developments in American intercollegiate athletics: the literally declining fortunes of many of the nation's intercollegiate programs. A series of articles in the *New York Times* accurately communicated the twin types of problems confronting the leaders of men's intercollegiate athletics. On January 3, 1931, under a headline of "Football Viewed as Facing Crisis" appeared this introduction: "College athletics in general and football in particular, still suffering somewhat from the growing pains of super-salesmanship and ballyhoo, have been abruptly brought to face with somewhat critical conditions for 1931." Citing a "cross-fire of criticism leveled at intercollegiate football during the final week of the old year," and the "combined ills of over-emphasis and the effects of considerable depression in the region of the box offices," the Associated Press author reported that college and conference officials across the country had begun taking steps to limit the negative effects of football.

The construction boom may have made the cancellation of intercollegiate athletics very difficult, but the combination of a reform movement critical of the commercialization and conduct of intercollegiate athletics and the economic hardships that were especially evident during the early 1930s made the scenario at least slightly more likely. Dramatic headlines of the early 1930s called attention to an ominous trend for athletic administrators: the literally declining fortunes of many of the nation's intercollegiate programs. Within two weeks the *New York Times* had published at least seven more articles chronicling the existing debates over the impact of Savage's Carnegie Report and detailing the deteriorating financial situations and changing plans of various
American universities' athletic programs. The new president of the University of Pennsylvania called for a return of athletics to pure student control to fix the identified problems; in contrast, other officials claimed that universities had already reduced their unauthorized recruiting of athletes on their own. Still others argued that nothing had changed in the two years since the release of Savage's report. In fact, according to a January 14, 1931 article, Southern "college authorities [were] unanimous in [their] opinion that football is not overemphasized" and that the Carnegie Report had been "fruitless."\(^{18}\)

In spite of the earlier voiced dire warnings of an impending athletic funding crisis, the Associated Press reported that several institutions, especially those on the West Coast, actually planned on expanding their stadiums in the near future. This sustained optimism reflected the continued financial success of many Western schools' athletic programs, particularly the football teams. For example, although Stanford's records revealed a revenue decline, the football team still produced $480,000 in one season, while Southern California reaped more than $500,000. Even the much smaller St. Mary's University experienced an increase in attendance exceeding 100,000 spectators. The University of California suffered a small decline in football revenue, falling from 1929's total of $665,000 to 1930's total of $615,000, but officials there remained optimistic, at least for a little while longer.\(^{19}\)

Five months later, another New York Times report further undermined whatever optimism remained in athletic circles across the country. Citing a more recent Carnegie Report, Bulletin 26, the author reported that undergraduates and the general public had become less enthusiastic about intercollegiate athletics and that the economic depression
had finally caught up to intercollegiate athletic programs. Purdue University’s football program, for example, had generated in 1930-31 $97,000 less than planners had predicted, leading to an operating deficit of $40,000. Overall, the bulletin reported that eighty percent of surveyed institutions had been forced to cut back on their athletic programs, in terms of sports offered, in games played, or in both.\textsuperscript{20}

The early years of the decade brought with them dramatically reduced athletic revenues for American universities, but the university administrators remained committed to continuing their intercollegiate athletic programs in as complete a form as fiscally possible. By doing so, they insured the preservation of the uniquely American institution of intercollegiate athletics. Entering the 1930s, few public institutions had athletic incomes surpassing those of California and Ohio State, just as few state universities earned less than Maryland from its athletic teams. In terms of athletic revenue in the 1920s and 1930s, the universities of Texas and Tennessee fall in to the vast middle ground between these two poles. Despite their vast differences in scale, these and other American universities shared similar responses to the revenue crunch of the early 1930s: they fought to continue football on its previous scale and to sustain the other programs as well as they could. The shrinking pool of available money and the continued dominance of football also led in many places to considerations of cutting out all or many minor sports. Ultimately, most institutions did not completely cancel their minor sports programs, but most did limit the numbers of games, the amount of travel, and even the numbers of participants.
Athletic profits turned to deficits across the nation in the early 1930s. For example, at the University of Maryland, the football team produced an annual profit between $25,000 and $30,000 a year in the late 1920s, but by 1932 sharply reduced revenues led the university’s athletic director to proclaim publicly that the decline in fortunes would not lead to a corresponding reduction in the numbers of sports offered at Maryland. A mere three months later, a different story emanated from College Park, as the Washington News reported that Maryland officials were leaning toward canceling all spring intercollegiate sports. At that time, University of Maryland Vice President, and former football coach, Harry C. Byrd confirmed the seriousness of the situation in a private letter to University of Georgia president, Dr. S. V. Sanford, writing “All our athletic money is impounded in a bank and under the relief bill now before the legislature, we shall be able to draw out only 2% per month. I see nothing in front of us except to call off all spring sports.” Ultimately, as an alumni magazine report had predicted, the University of Maryland was able to fund and field an entire slate of spring varsity and freshman sports teams in 1933, but its leaders were not alone in considering dropping sports.

The situation at the University of Texas was in many ways analogous to that in College Park and most other public universities: officials had become accustomed to deploying football profits to finance the schools’ other athletic activities. As at Maryland, football revenue produced the vast majority of Texas’s athletic income entering the 1930s, but at Texas the numbers were much larger. As occurred across the country during the 1930s, Texas football continued to provide the largest piece of the pie, even as the entire pie kept shrinking in the decade’s early years. Despite producing
income exceeding $120,000 in 1927-28 and more than $150,000 in both 1928-29 and 1929-30, the University of Texas intercollegiate athletic program continued to operate at a deficit, in part because operating expenditures in these years consumed at least two-thirds of the income and in part because of large debt payments on the new gymnasium and sports field. In August 1928, intercollegiate athletics at Texas had a deficit of $29,000; in August 1929, it was $37,000. By August 1930, the deficit had climbed to $48,000, and officials estimated in early 1931 that by August of that year the deficit would expand to more than $63,000. In the context of this ominous trend, officials could not have been pleased to see another related trend, that of declining football revenues.23

Texas's income from its most profitable and popular sport steadily and sharply declined in the early 1930s. With an alternating schedule dictating where the most lucrative games were played, during the years 1928-1931, gross football receipts hovered between $150,000 and $125,000; meanwhile, the net football receipts remained remarkably stable, actually increasing by a little more than $1,000 a year from $101,236.50 to $103,802.26. The next three years were not as kind to the financial managers in Austin. In 1931-32 and 1932-33, the gross football receipts took a 30 percent plunge before stabilizing just above $100,000 before dropping again to $68,724, a figure only 46 percent of the total a mere four years before, while the net football receipts declined proportionally as well, even when adjusted for deflation.24 Between 1930 and 1934, football continued to turn a profit for the university, but the profit margin also narrowed dramatically over the four-year period. After an encouraging profit increase from $63,677 in 1930 to $71,284 in 1931, the profits fell from $47,364 to $37,283 to $15,722 for the following three years. Throughout this period, all other
University of Texas intercollegiate athletic programs continued to lose money, some more than others.25

The main branches of the Universities of Maryland and Texas were not exceptions to the rule; their experiences were the rule in the early years of the 1930s. J. W. Coombs, a southern intercollegiate baseball coach wrote to the A. G. Spalding and Brothers Sporting Goods Company explaining the plight of minor sports programs across the South. Of the 23 Southern Conference schools, Coombs reported in November 1932, 21 fielded baseball teams, but he warned that this ratio would not survive without some help. Coombs cautioned his equipment distributor, “we are simply up against it here in the South. Our minor sports program is being reduced, our baseball schedule is being cut to the lowest possible level and unless some concession can be given to us by the manufacturers of our equipment, it will not be long before baseball will fall in the tracks of the minor sports, the same as it has done in several of our Southern Conference Colleges.”26 Across the South and the rest of the nation, it was becoming clear that the reduced football profits could no longer support minor sports to the extent that they had during the 1920s.

The Commissioner of the Big Ten also spoke in the early 1930s about the necessity of negotiating equipment discounts for his member institutions. Big Ten institutions faced the fact that the earlier predicted continuation of prosperity had not materialized. Looking back in 1937, Ralph Aigler, the University of Michigan’s Chairman of the Board in Control of Physical Education, could note with irony that the borrowing and building spree of the late 1920s had “seemed a perfectly safe procedure.” However, as Aigler noted, the drop in Michigan’s football income from $400,000 in 1929
to $152,000 in 1935 had made him reconsider, even though the athletic programs had somehow been able to stay "in the black" and had avoided defaulting on any loans. Although Aigler remained confident that a general economic upturn would remove insecurity from all aspects of athletic financing, he expressed hope that "the time will also come when the intra- and extramural sports program will no longer depend upon the efforts of boys playing football for its chief support." That time would not arrive during the 1930s, if ever.

Ohio State had no other option but to rely upon its young men playing football if the university were to maintain its commitment to a large men's intercollegiate athletic program, and it most certainly did intend to keep the program intact. As at almost all other institutions, football served at Ohio State as the chief revenue producer and as the chief source of funding for all other athletic programs.
Figure 2.1. Ohio State Athletic Income, 1927-1936.

The reliance on football as the main source of income becomes clear when one examines the chart highlighting the close correlation between O.S.U.'s "games and sports" receipt totals and the football receipt totals. For example, in 1927-28, when the "games and sports" receipt total was $434,464, football generated $425,586, almost 98 percent of the total. The next year football generated more than 99 percent of the total games and sports receipts. Throughout the 1930s, the O.S.U. athletic department would continue to rely upon football for the overwhelming majority of its athletic revenues. Even in 1932-33, when the total receipts had plummeted to $129,111, football produced
$118,789 of that figure, more than 92 percent. The chart’s information also shows that university budgeters clearly recognized their dependence upon football receipts. The 1935-36 games and sports total was an estimate based, in April 1936, on the known football receipt total of $252,536. 30

Ohio State’s counterparts in the upper echelon of athletic spending experienced less dramatic, but still substantial, revenue reductions in the early 1930s. In the 1929 calendar year, the University of California’s football team brought in $622,547 and cost the university just more than a quarter of a million dollars, leaving a net profit of $372,125. The rest of the U.C.B. intercollegiate athletic program ran a deficit of $84,338, not considering general overhead expenses, but the football profits still allowed the A.S.U.C. to claim a $225,004 profit from athletics. A mere three years later, football profits had dropped by more than one-third to $244,525; in 1933 the football profit margin was only slightly higher at $246,330. These numbers, though lower than the university had come to expect, help illustrate the continuing profitability of football during the Depression. While officials were able to deal with stabilizing football profits, the overall athletic financial picture at California was not quite so rosy. In the academic year ending in 1933, U.C.B. athletics still made money, but instead of earning the $225,000 from 1929 or even the $142,055 from 1932, athletics brought in only $68,042. Adjusted for deflation, this total was the equivalent of $89,000 in 1929 money. Make no mistake, other institutions would have loved to have had only the problems of reduced profitability that California officials faced, but the U.C.B. problems of relative decline were real, and certainly felt real, nonetheless. 31
The period between 1932-34 represented the lowest points for the athletic programs, both large and small, of American universities. The responses of athletic officials to the fiscal setbacks of the early Depression were characteristic of national responses to the economic crisis. By the 1933-34 school year national athletic revenue streams had slowed to a trickle instead of continuing to gush as officials had predicted in the late 1920s. The University of Illinois provides another useful example of how universities experienced the fluctuating fortunes of the early and mid-1930s. In chart below, one can see how the University of Illinois’s athletic fortunes reached their nadir in the 1932-33 academic year before beginning a slow recovery. This chart also graphically illustrates the close relationship between total athletic revenue and football revenue at another representative public American university. Even if the overall numbers are not completely representative—most American schools did not bring in more than $400,000 from athletics in the late 1920s—the general pattern held at most other universities.32
During the early 1930s, a period of declining athletic revenues, profits and administrators' confidence, athletic leaders became less concerned with the commercialization of college athletics and more concerned with the continuation of them. If universities relied almost solely upon football to finance their athletic programs, then it was usually "Big Game" revenues that kept the sinking football programs afloat. University officials recognized early on that with the peaks of interest tied to playing a traditional rival or a novel, high-profile game came much-needed infusions of cash. They recognized that their institutions could rebound from financial losses more quickly if their teams played more enticing match-ups, games that would justify higher ticket prices while drawing larger crowds. As one author pointed out in December 1931, one point was clear, "the public with less money to spend is going to be more critical in making
purchases, and this will also apply to its choice of football games.” He continued, warning his colleagues that “practice games with easy opponents will not fill the stands. Schools that are anxious to hold their spectator interest therefore will have to be careful in building their schedules to include more teams that offer close and interesting rivalry.” The author expressed optimism that if officials followed this advice then football could “hold its own in the new scale to which the public will adjust its spending.”

To many officials and to much of the general public, “attractive” games meant challenging one of the established, elite universities, including those that had reputations for excellence in academics as well as athletics, Harvard and Yale, and those that did not. Notre Dame most explicitly. Affiliation with the elite institutions through athletics was a well established practice by the 1930s, with the excitement surrounding a 1929 Yale football team visit to the University of Georgia serving as a perfect example of how schools used sports to affiliate themselves with others and ‘betters.” In 1931, the University of Texas football team traveled cross-country to play against the Harvard squad, a journey made despite reservations about the “large deficit and commitments of [the] athletic association.” As it turned out, the university made $19,320 from the trip, making the game the second most lucrative in terms of revenue that year, missing first place by only $314. Still, without knowing this, the Regents provided $2,500 to finance a 40 man band traveling to Cambridge in part because some Texas officials wanted to put on a “big show” and because some thought that the band would “add much to the impression made by [the] team on its first trip east.” Similarly, in the late 1920s and early 1930s, the University of Maryland often played Yale University in football, along
with Washington College, the University of Virginia, the Naval Academy, Washington and Lee University, and Johns Hopkins University.36

Some schools used athletics to solidify, not create, status while also generating revenues. The University of California considered itself to be the academic peer of Harvard and Yale, and its officials sought to confirm that status by using athletic competition to demonstrate their relative equality. In the mid-1930s, U.C. president Sproul pushed for a track meet pitting a team representing all California campuses, including Berkeley, Los Angeles, Davis, and San Francisco, against a unified Harvard and Yale or a combined Oxford and Cambridge team. Either way, U.C. officials wanted to compete against “some team representative of two first-class universities.”37

However, raised prestige through track meets would not have necessarily paid the bills, so the California officials also pursued a football game with the perceived polar opposite of the “first-class universities,” Notre Dame. In 1931, as athletic receipts were beginning to bottom out at the University of California, the Dean of Men presented several arguments for an athletic relationship with Notre Dame. Dean Putnam pointed out that the football team would miss only a total of five days of class during the entire 1933 football season and only three days during the 1932 season; therefore president Sproul would not look like a hypocrite in endorsing the games after insisting that academic work must come first. Secondly, Putnam refuted the argument that “we would lose caste academically if we played Notre Dame” because California already competed against many other lesser academic institutions. “Ideally,” Putnam wrote, “we would like to play institutions of our own standards, both academically and athletically. Few, if any,” he noted, “institutions have this privilege and certainly we do not.” Thirdly, Dean
Putnam contended that California's "local prestige will be greatly enhanced amongst all football followers, and in general with alumni," if U.C.B. played Notre Dame. If California chose to decline the offer, Putnam warned, Stanford would surely accept, and California would enhance its "snobbish" reputation while the "athletic prestige" of Stanford grew.38

However exciting and lucrative single games against prominent foes could be, most universities relied more on traditional grudge matches for their consistent revenue boosts. For the University of Texas during the 1930s, the University of Oklahoma and the Texas Agricultural and Mechanical University served as the principal rivals and the main generators of revenue, as the following chart indicates. Although in 1931-32 and 1935-36 these two rivalries did not provide the two highest grossing games of the Texas football seasons, they both always ranked in the top four income-producing games. Comparing the money received for these two contests to the receipts from another annual rival, Centenary, highlights the fact that most football profits, and therefore most athletic revenue, at Texas came from a small number of games, and that tradition alone would not pay the bills. 39
Similarly, the revenue from the Ohio State-Michigan football games traditionally constituted the largest single contribution to the coffers of the participants’ athletic programs, and they continued to do so throughout the worst years of the Depression. Nonetheless, even if the Michigan game maintained its position as the most important and most lucrative single event, the early 1930s witnessed a steep decline in total game receipts for it and other games at O.S.U. During the eight years between 1927 and 1936, the Michigan game was always one of the top two money-producing contests for O.S.U., but as the following chart indicates, even this annual and attractive game was not able to preserve its production levels during the lean years of the early to mid-1930s. Fortunately for the institution, Ohio State officials were wise enough to schedule additional games against other very attractive opponents during the 1930s, producing not only spikes of additional fan interest but also spectator dollars. For example, the 1929
and 1930 Ohio State-Pittsburgh football games combined produced more than $92,000 in receipts; in 1930 and 1931, games against Navy nearly equaled that amount. Another home game in 1935 against Notre Dame generated almost $180,000 for the two schools to split, just when they needed it most. As the overall total declined, the percentage of the revenue coming from these two or three "big games" became much more significant.40

These big games held great importance for several reasons. First, they interested large numbers of potential university supporters and often elicited favorable national attention and media coverage; second, they induced people to spend their precious disposable income at the stadiums' ticket windows. Finally, these games allowed the universities to charge much higher ticket prices, and therefore to make much more money from the marquee contests than regular games did. During the 1930s, the ability to charge full prices for game tickets was a rare privilege, and the universities took advantage of every opportunity they had to make spectators pay relatively high prices to witness games. The 1935 O.S.U.-Notre Dame game provides the best example of how schools used attractive games to escalate their ticket prices. Ohio State sold 54,504 tickets to that game: 4,061 box seats for $4 each, 45,828 for $3.30, and 4615 for $2.20. In other words, Ohio State sold 49,000 tickets at more than three dollars. To put this number into perspective, disregarding the 16,120 season tickets O.S.U. sold that year, the university sold only 2,028 additional tickets for as much as three dollars and none for more than three dollars, out of the other 90,348 tickets it sold for home games that year.41
The higher ticket prices permitted by the attractiveness of high-profile games were much more important during the early 1930s as university athletic programs felt forced to slash their other ticket prices in order to get people to attend their games. At Ohio State and other places, the depressed circumstances compelled the universities to lower many of their tickets’ prices in the hopes of retaining interest and fan support, and most were not eager to do so. In early 1932, the O.S.U. director of ticket sales, Henry D. Taylor, wrote to athletic director Lynn St. John that he had a “sinking feeling” as he
presented his proposed list of reduced football prices. Still, Taylor believed that, "with conditions as they are, it might be advisable to offer such a bargain."^3

These "bargains" were seen in the prices for less notable games as well as in the ticket prices for the most important Ohio State game of the year, the Michigan game. A quick comparison will illustrate the exactly how the declining ticket prices affected athletic finances. In 1930, Ohio State played nearby Mount Union College in football, attracting 10,217 fans that paid a total of $12,543 to see the game. Three years later, the University of Virginia's football team visited Columbus, and more that 49,500 fans witnessed the spectacle. The much larger crowd did not translate into much larger profits. On the contrary, 42,987 of those fans (almost 87 percent) paid only ten cents for "children's" tickets to see the game, and only 351 paid more than one dollar. Despite the enormous crowd, the Virginia game brought in less than $10,000 of ticket revenue for Ohio State.^4

Along similar lines, O.S.U. even had to reduce the prices of coveted Michigan tickets during the early 1930s. In 1930, Ohio State offered no Michigan tickets for less than three dollars, and the university sold 54,251 tickets for three dollars and 4,560 for four dollars. Two years later, while almost 22,000 spectators paid three dollars or more for their tickets, single ticket sales for the Michigan game fell from 58,811 to 35,533, even though O.S.U. also offered $2.20 and $1.50 tickets. By the 1934 home game, Ohio State sold only 2,079 three dollars tickets. In contrast, seventy-five percent of the 50,000 fans paid either $2.50 or $2 for their tickets, and twenty percent paid less than two dollars. In other words, four years after the minimum ticket price for the Michigan game was three dollars, ninety-five percent of the paying customers purchased their tickets for
less than that. The following chart illustrates how, even with 1934 and 1935 seasons' popular and lucrative home games against Michigan and Notre Dame respectively, lower priced tickets came to represent a much more significant percentage of overall ticket sales in the early to mid-1930s.

The Structure of Ticket Prices at O.S.U.

![Figure 2.5. Structure of Football Ticket Prices at Ohio State, 1930-1935.](image)

Following the logic of O.S.U.'s St. John when he explained in 1932 that it was neither "reasonable nor good business for us to charge the same prices for the Indiana game here as we do for the Michigan game," other athletic departments around the nation adjusted their ticket prices during the 1930s, seeking the perfect price that would allow them to continue attracting large numbers of fans but that also recognized that the fans might be reluctant to spend as much as they used to for tickets. For example, the University of Texas charged only $1.10 for all tickets to the 1933 football context against Southwestern University and the "Mines" College, and it priced the "choice seats" for the
Centenary game at $2.00, allowing the “majority seats” to sell for $1.50. Most other games that season followed the same price structure as the Centenary game. However, the next year, Texas officials reduced the best Centenary seats to $1.50 and sold the rest for only $1.10, while the university also approved lower priced ticket options for most of the other games as well.47

It is clear that “big games” and “big money” could mean much different things to different universities during the 1930s. Without classifications such as those that exist today (N.C.A.A. Divisions I, IAA, II, III, N.A.I.A.), when commentators discussed college athletics, they spoke generally. Using such generalizations today, however, obscures the wide range of athletic income and spending that existed even among the major state universities. The University of Maryland represents the low end of the spectrum, entering the decade of the 1930s with average football net profits between $25,000 and $30,000 a year. In 1930, University officials believed that they had finally found a cash cow, a football series against the Naval Academy with one game in Annapolis and two in either Baltimore or in Washington, D.C. The contract arranging the contests specified that if a game in the series grossed more than $80,000, then the universities would split the net proceeds in half, but with the Naval Academy getting an additional $6,000. If the net total were less than $80,000, then the division would be a true 50:50 split. Based on the 1932 financial summary of the game, the nitpicking about what would happen once the revenue topped $80,000 had been an exercise in futility. After printing almost 60,000 tickets for the game, Maryland and Navy sold precisely 8,761 of them. This produced a net profit of $5,989 that the universities, as agreed upon, split in half. Still, Maryland athletic officials must have been happy to make a profit at
all, considering that the next week’s financial report indicated a net loss of $299.92 for an away game against Washington and Lee University, witnessed by 738 customers. 48

While Maryland spent the rest of the decade hoping to net the $2-2,500 a football game necessary to make football “self-supporting,” other institutions across the nation set their sights much higher, still relying upon big games to make their budgets work.49 The University of Tennessee, for example, grossed more than $73,000, netting more than $50,000 from a 1934 football game against the University of Alabama, Tennessee’s traditional rival, and the university reaped more than $100,000 from its 1940 appearance in the Rose Bowl, a game the football team lost.50

University officials responded to the economic slowdown and athletic revenue shortfalls of the 1930s with a myriad of solutions. Without exception, they cut administrative costs but not their own positions. At many institutions athletic officials only grudgingly accepted the salary reductions that were mandatory in all other university departments. Individual institutions and conference officials almost immediately targeted minor sports programs for reductions in the number of programs, in the number of games, or in both. Recognizing the potential pitfalls that lay ahead, John Griffith, the Commissioner of the Big Ten warned in 1931 that the universities might have to act more like private businesses and discontinue unprofitable lines, minor sports.51

Still, the officials’ decisions were not always a simple financial decision; schools did not always cut the programs that lost the most money, otherwise more would have dropped football during the early 1930s. C. Robert Barnett has pointed out that the decade between 1928 and 1938 in Ohio witnessed a twelve percent increase in the
number of the state's intercollegiate teams, with a total growth of 23 teams; he connected this general increase to the growth of student populations across the state. From his study of public and private, large and small Ohio colleges and universities during the 1930s, Barnett concluded that many schools had to cut their most expensive programs and that these were most often team sports, particularly football and baseball. Individual sports, however, became more popular intercollegiate options during the 1930s, largely because they were relatively inexpensive to organize and because they did not usually require the large staffs that colleges ordinarily provided for their team sports. While Barnett's data and analysis yield useful insight on the operations of a wide variety of institutions, much of his information pertains to the small, liberal arts colleges that populate the Ohio countryside and does not really address the circumstances affecting the large public universities that dominated college athletics.

Barnett's descriptions of the financial troubles hounding university officials rings true though, and it only makes sense that in the face of reduced revenues and a less than certain future, university athletic officials would first seek to cut costs, especially salaries, during the early 1930s and then try to restore them gradually after the athletic economic recovery began in the late 1930s. At Ohio State, the athletic department officials initially resisted all suggestions that they submit to salary reductions as all other university employees had to do, basing their argument on the independence supposedly granted by separate athletic revenue sources. Ultimately, athletic personnel grudgingly worked out an agreement with the Board of Trustees, one that required reductions only on the salary portions that came from non-athletic sources. This reduction can be seen most clearly in the O.S.U. athletic department's "administration and general expenditures" in the years
1929-1935. The university had allocated more than $128,000 for this line item in 1929-30, but when the university began suffering from economic difficulties, administrators cut the expenses to $112,000, then to $89,000, and finally to the mid- to upper-$50,000s where the expenses remained from 1931 to 1935.\textsuperscript{54}

Ohio State was only one of many institutions that employed athletic officials reluctant to follow the same salary guidelines as other university employees. Speaking in 1933, a Northwestern University professor noted “the problem of salary adjustment is a most difficult one. I do not think that any member of the coaching staff can expect to avoid the cuts that have fallen the lot of the entire faculty of his institution.” He continued, discussing the “several instances where coaches and directors were granted exemptions and the ill feeling and criticism that it aroused on the faculty cost the unfortunate individuals for a more than they gained.”\textsuperscript{55}

American athletic officials and coaches felt entitled to exemptions from university-wide salary reductions because universities had already established the precedent of treating them differently, especially in matters of compensation. One of Savage’s primary criticisms of intercollegiate athletics was the elevation of professional coach to a position of great importance and power on the university campus. Savage argued that the “position of a coach whose tenure depends upon victory is both unfortunate and unfair. The situation is deleterious to sport but especially to education, however it is defined.”\textsuperscript{56} His 1929 report used salary differences to highlight the separation of the academic from the athletic on American campuses. Savage found that among the surveyed institutions, the highest paid full professor made $12,000, while the best compensated football coach made $14,000. The median salary for full professors
was $5,000, against $6,000 for the coaches, and the average professor salary was $5,158, against $6,107 for the coaches. Generally, Savage and his colleagues found that smaller institutions were doing a better job than larger schools of keeping coaches and professors in the same salary structure. 57

This criticism of coaches as an privileged elite within the university certainly applied to the state universities of California, Texas, Ohio, Tennessee, and Maryland, as well as to most other American universities. When the University of Texas was signing in January of 1931 a three year contract paying Clyde Littlefield $6,500 a year to be head football and track coach, the University of California paid its head football coach $8,500 a year plus an additional $3,500 a year for his duties as head track coach. In January 1929 California also generously compensated its crew coach with a $500 raise, bringing his annual salary up to $7,500. The coming of a national depression did not deter the University of California from giving its next football coach an even more lucrative compensation package. In 1931, after earlier deciding to pay no more than $15,000 a year, the A.S.U.C. awarded Bill Ingram a three year contract worth $13,000 a year, and the Associated Students also provided Ingram with $3,000 to cover his moving expenses. 58

Only two years later, California’s athletic officials deemed this salary excessive. In a retrenchment move, the A.S.U.C. cancelled Ingram’s $13,000 a year contract and gave him a new one worth just more than 75 percent of his existing contract; the new one paid Ingram “only” $10,000 a year for two years. Similarly, the highly paid and very successful crew coach, who had been earning $7,500 a year, also had to accept a new contract paying him $5,750 a year for two years. 59

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Although during the 1920s and 1930s American universities paid more, in terms of attention and salary, to their football programs, they did not leave the other coaches poverty-stricken. As the crew coach's salary indicates, California's largess was not restricted to the football program; still, the salary structure revealed a great deal about the areas of athletic emphasis. For example, after paying C. M. Price $4,500 to be the head basketball coach (he had also been the head football coach) in 1930-31, the university signed him to a one-year $3,000 contract in April 1931 and to a two-year contract at $3,500 in March of 1932. Meanwhile, over the same years Leonard B. Allison, an important assistant football coach, earned $7,500 and then $9,000 a year. In 1932, while Price received $3,500 as the head basketball coach, another football assistant almost doubled his salary, earning $6,000. In contrast, the university would not pay more than $5,000 for a head track coach. However, once Allison became head football coach in November 1934, his salary remained stable at $9,000 with a three-year contract. Football was the most important sport on campus, and the salary structure reflected its position.

The head football coach's salary at California did not reach the symbolic $10,000 figure again until the 1937-38 season, and it did not again surpass it until April of 1939, when the head basketball coach finally earned $5,000. While the A.S.U.C. executives decided that they could again afford to pay the football coach more than $10,000 and the basketball coach $5,000, they also decided that they could not return completely to the compensation excesses of the late 1920s and the early 1930s. To make this point clearly, the executives included in their minutes their belief that "the salary of an assistant
football coach should not exceed $6,000.” This time they drew the line: they would pay $6,000 (and they immediately did), but not more.61

Many Midwestern universities displayed the same priorities as the University of California did in their athletic salary structures during the 1930s, as a one-year snapshot will illustrate. During one of the worst years of the Depression, 1932-33, the average Big Ten head football coach’s salary was $7,709, with the lowest being $5,000 at the University of Iowa and highest coming from the University of Wisconsin at $10,000. In contrast, the average salary for Big Ten head basketball coaches was $4,672, a mere 60 percent of the football coaches’ average. Judging by these figures, Ohio State provides an appropriate sample for those wanting to observe national trends of compensation and depression-induced retrenchment. In 1931-32 the head football coach at Ohio State received $7,800; all but $300 of this total came from athletic receipts. Reflecting plummeting athletic revenues, in 1932-33 the coach earned $7,150 with $6,650 coming from athletic receipts. Over the same two-year period, the head basketball coach’s total compensation fell from $6,000 to $5,100, and the track and cross country coach lost 12 percent of his salary as it dropped from $5,450 to $4,800. The university eliminated the entire salaries of the tennis, golf, gymnastics, fencing, rifle, soccer, and polo coaches, even though most of these men had made less than $600 in 1931-32, as they relegated these sports to intramural status. By 1934 though, the O.S.U. Athletic Board members believed that they could afford to commit to a three-year contract providing $7,500 a year to the colorful and exciting new football coach, Francis Schmidt.62

Unlike coaches at many other institutions, Robert Neyland never faced a salary reduction while coaching at the University of Tennessee during the Depression. His high
salary was not entirely a result of his personal negotiating power and past successes; it also reflected the general importance the Volunteers placed on football. When military duties called Neyland overseas during the mid-1930s, his replacement still earned $6,000 a year, three times more than the highest paid professor’s salary. Still, that high salary did not compare to the one Neyland received after he returned to the Knoxville campus. In part to fend off any potential suitors from other schools, the Board of Trustees gave Neyland a $1,500 raise, increasing his total salary for his work as athletic director and football coach to $13,500. In 1940, the university president earned only 63 percent, $8,400 of Neyland’s salary; in fact, that year the president ran his entire office for less than what Neyland made, a sum greater than 10 percent of the entire Liberal Arts College budget.

If most large public American universities did not respond to the financial problems of the early 1930s by cutting major sports programs or coaches’ salaries too dramatically, they did not restrain from whittling away at their “minor” sports programs. At almost every institution, all sports but football were indeed unprofitable, or at most barely covered their own expenses. This is not to imply that minor sports did not contribute tangibly to the athletic environment at many American universities; often institutions were able to claim national championship titles, and the resulting prestige, because these minor sports programs existed. For example, the fact that the University of California’s crew team represented the United States in the 1928 and 1932 Olympics brought much positive coverage to the university, as did the highly successful University of Maryland lacrosse team.
American colleges and universities preserved the breadth of their men’s intercollegiate athletic programs to a remarkable degree during the trying years of the 1930s. Instead of jettisoning many less popular teams and programs, athletic officials doggedly kept them operating by taking institutional and conference-wide steps to reduce costs and to minimize losses. In 1933, one professor was pleased to report to his colleagues that, although American schools “had been forced to curtail severely” their minor sports programs “but few institutions have been forced to drop outright from their program any sport that had previously met with favor by the students.” This national observation gains credence when one examines the fates of minor sports at a variety of American public universities.

As mentioned earlier, Southern Conference institutions shared enough financial difficulties in the fall of 1932 that many, including the University of Maryland, considered dropping, or at least trimming, their spring sports offerings. Although complete cancellation proved to be unnecessary, Maryland officials took several steps to reduce the financial drain created by the unprofitable spring sports. As one news report indicted, since even popular spring sports did “not draw sufficient numbers to College Park,” school officials considered “play[ing] their big games on foreign fields.” The report noted especially the baseball team’s ability to attract crowds in North Carolina and Virginia and the lacrosse team’s attractiveness to teams in the North and in Baltimore. At the same time the University of Texas officials strongly resisted the Southwest Conference proposal to abolish baseball completely because of the Depression.

Other institutions sought to maintain minor sports programs while reducing expenses by limiting the numbers of games, players, and trips. For example, Ohio State
stopped sending its baseball teams on Southern trips because of the expense during the Depression, and along with other Big Ten institutions O.S.U. also took several other steps to minimize costs. In 1933 Big Ten member institutions voted to limit the number of baseball players that could travel to away games to 13, 15 if the traveling team would play multiple games. The schools also set limits on the wages schools could pay the one umpire for baseball games. They similarly restricted the numbers of competitions for wrestling and other sports, and Ohio State established a "hitch hike" plan utilizing private cars and personal favors to get its athletes to their competitions. 67

When it came time for athletic budgeting committees to identify their funding priorities, minor sports generally did not triumph, but, importantly, they also did not disappear. Instead, just as in the early 1930s athletic officials across the nation labored to maintain as extensive an intercollegiate sporting program as possible for their male students, by the mid- to late-1930s many institutions were eager and able to add to their men's athletic offerings, especially programs that would utilize the new athletic facilities the universities had built. Ohio State added swimming as a varsity sport when the new swimming pool opened in 1931, but it could not support all of its established sports in the early 1930s. In 1930, the Board of Trustees cited lack of funds in its refusal to recognize boxing as a varsity sport, but by 1936 the university was able to increase its contributions to many minor sports. For example, at its November 23, 1936 meeting, the Athletic Board added budgetary line items totaling almost $2000 to fund pistol and rifle shooting, polo, and fencing teams. 68

The Universities of Texas, California, and Maryland took similar actions to support minor sports in spirit if not always in budgetary line items. In 1933 the University
of Texas Athletic Council authorized the designation of fencing as a varsity sport with the understanding that the council would not contribute financially to the program, and in 1936 boxing and wrestling got "unofficial probational" status, meaning that they were not intercollegiate varsity activities but that participants got certain benefits and recognition, including full use of the gymnasium and other recreational facilities. The council, however, rejected numerous applications requesting varsity status for polo. After limiting all activities in 1931 in an effort to avoid large deficits, the A.S.U.C. approved polo as a varsity sport in 1934, provided that the team’s expenses did not exceed its income. That same year, director of physical education Frank Kleeberger argued for an expansive sports program, stating that the university should do everything it could to expose students to as many sporting opportunities as possible, including cricket, tennis, and soccer. In 1934 California officials also recognized that they had to pay more attention to their track program; with a crowd greater than 12,000 at the last University of Southern California-California meet, the interest certainly existed. Throughout the 1930s Maryland students competed in intercollegiate sports not officially recognized or funded by the athletic board but assisted by the physical education department. Although the Maryland Athletic Director recognized many problems with this arrangement, he thought the benefits to the students outweighed the problems such decentralization caused. By 1940, Maryland had elevated three of these club sports—soccer, wrestling, and golf—to varsity status.

Another response to the financial pressures of the Depression was to cater to the prevailing consumer culture by encouraging more exciting styles of play and by trying to buy success by hiring brand name coaches, men who had achieved success on their own
or who were connected with successful programs, often Notre Dame. When replacing its football coach between the 1933 and 1934 seasons, Ohio State hired Francis Schmidt, a coach acclaimed for the style and flair that his Texas Christian University teams had displayed, in direct contrast to the unimaginative, if successful, style of his Ohio State predecessor, Sam Willaman. According to university historian James Pollard, Schmidt "was an exponent of open football and ushered in an era of 'razzle-dazzle' play in the Stadium and on opponents' fields which attracted wide attention and greatly increased the interest in football." Pollard also noted "Schmidt himself was equally colorful."

In its two football coach hires of the 1930s, the University of Texas demonstrated the two methods of attracting a great deal of enthusiasm for a program: hiring one coach to establish connections with the legends of Notre Dame and hiring one coach with a recognizable name and successful reputation. In 1931, when the University of Texas hired Jack Chevigny as its football coach, the Longhorns got the man who had tied the score with a touchdown in the famous Army-Notre Dame "Gipper" game and a man who had also coached at his alma mater under Knute Rockne. It would have been difficult to find an individual with more personal brushes with celebrity and success than Chevigny in 1931, and the University of Texas community seemed pleased with its hire.

Although Chevigny's teams had several successful seasons, including a win over his alma mater in 1934, the personal-institutional relationship soured, and the Texas Athletic Council began to look for another star to buy. And the council did have to buy their target, Dana X. Bible, away from his joint appointment as athletic director and head football coach at the University of Nebraska because he was an established commodity. Before his tenure at Nebraska, Bible had coached Texas A & M and had won five
Southwest Conference championships in a decade, a stretch that included two teams that
did not surrender a point. After continuing his success at Nebraska, Bible was a star in the
coaching world; in fact, Benjamin Rader listed Bible along with Glenn “Pop” Warner and
Knute Rockne as the most famous college football coaches of the 1920-1950 era. 72

The University of Texas Athletic Council offered Bible in 1937 a 10-year contract
to serve as athletic director at $7,500 a year, a 5-year contract to serve as football coach
at $7,500 a year, and it arranged for “interested people outside the University” to give
Bible a $5,000 signing bonus. The council members justified the high price for Bible by
arguing that he would be able to increase the football team’s profits and that he would
soon earn the respect of the university’s faculty members who would, undoubtedly,
initially resent his pay scale. As an additional argument for Bible, the council contended
that Bible would “command and retain indefinitely the respect and cooperation of all
groups interested in athletic affairs more effectively than any other possible appointee,
which advantage alone justifies a large stipend.” 73 Although the committee members
recognized that Bible was expensive, they knew that they could not put a price tag on his
anticipated ability to build stronger community ties.

The commercial orientation increasingly extended to all aspects of college
athletics. Even if college officials at California and elsewhere could stomach playing
institutions not of their “own standards, both academically and athletically,” many
continued to echo the Carnegie Report’s worries and voiced real concerns about creeping
commercialism, the decline of amateurism, and the interference of athletics with the
intellectual pursuits of the university. Their actions, however, did not always match their
rhetoric. Throughout the Depression, many officials lessened their resistance to
commercial ties to their athletic teams, embracing almost any activity that could generate additional income for their universities. For example, they began signing contracts by the late 1930s allowing commercially sponsored radio broadcasts. Although the financial benefits for the universities were small, often less than $5,000 a year, doing this was just another action designed to bring in money and also to stir up interest among potential paying customers. In fact, the main argument against the broadcasts was not the commercial component but the fear that the availability of free broadcasts would dissuade fans from purchasing tickets to the games.\textsuperscript{74}

The University of Texas was one of the most blatant in its straying from the paths of pure amateurism; in fact, according to the minutes of the university’s Athletic Council, the subject of amateurism never came up in that body’s deliberations. Throughout the 1930s, University of Texas athletic teams, primarily baseball and men’s basketball, competed regularly against professional teams and other clubs not affiliated with educational institutions. For example, in 1929 the University of Texas Athletic Council approved baseball games against Babe Ruth’s New York Yankees and the New York Giants, and the university continued to allow games against professional teams throughout the following decade. In 1935, for a guarantee of $112.50, the Texas basketball team played Olson’s Terrible Swedes, and the next year the Athletic Council approved negotiations for a game with the New York Celtics, the “world’s professional championship team.”\textsuperscript{75} In 1935 the baseball team played two Texas League professional baseball teams; in 1938, the Athletic Council guaranteed the Cleveland Indians 80 percent of the gate revenue or $500 for a single baseball game, a total that was $200 more than what the council had promised to the St. Louis Browns a year earlier.\textsuperscript{76}
By the end of the 1930s, most university athletic officials believed that the tough times were over and that athletic revenues would return to stability, if not necessarily the levels of the late 1920s. Ohio State officials, for example, in 1936 projected that they would continue to gross more than $229,000 from their "games and sports" activities for the next nine years. This optimism was expressed after the Athletic Board members had witnessed the games and sports decline from $434,646 to $166,588 (with a low of $129,111) over the preceding eight years. 77 Certainly by the late 1930s athletic leaders at universities all across the country believed that they had made it through the toughest part of the crisis, and they found that they had done so with their athletic programs relatively unscathed. In most instances, they were right. These officials were able to preserve the institution of men's college athletics at large public universities primarily because football remained profitable throughout the decade, even if not to the same degree as before. Equally importantly, the leaders of American universities developed several successful strategies for dealing with the crises of confidence and income that the Depression caused. Through a combination of spending and program reductions, increased commercialism, and creative scheduling, American university athletic officials protected most of their major and minor sport programs from the financial distresses of the Depression. They did so in part because they had no choice: the universities had to pay the bills for the athletic construction of the 1920s and early 1930s. The officials did so, in part, because they wanted to protect their own salaries and stations. But they also did so, as the next chapter will explain, because they believed that intercollegiate athletics
could teach essential lessons about competition and perseverance to athletes and audiences that no other component of the university could teach.

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1 Howard J. Savage, Harold W. Bentley, John T. McGovern, and Dean F. Smiley, *American College Athletics* (New York: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1929), 78. Savage devoted an entire section of his chapter on "The Administrative Control of American College Athletics" to a discussion of the importance of the word "control" when applied to intercollegiate athletics. He pointed out that "no one talks of controlling the academic aspects of college life; most men speak of controlling athletics.”


4 Information on seating is from "Stadium Scrip" *The California Monthly* (July, 1930), 15; information on the dedication of the stadium is from Stadtman, *The University of California*, 288.


7 Savage’s *American College Athletics* argued that California and Ohio State had something else in common; Savage contended that they both belonged in the group of universities that decided "to erect stadiums for football and other branches before providing adequate indoor facilities." See *American College Athletics*, 91.


11 Pollard, *Ohio State Athletics*, 220.

12 Savage’s *American College Athletics* reports on some of the lesser athletic revenue totals as well. For example, Baylor University made only $10,000 a year in athletic profits, while Cornell netted only $19,000. Southern Methodist University athletic programs produced $117,000 in gross revenue and a profit of $27,000. As the text will demonstrate, the universities of Texas, Tennessee, and Maryland invite more appropriate comparisons with these institutions than with the biggest of the big time programs, such as California and Ohio State. See Savage, *American College Athletics*, 87. Athletic Council Minutes, 6
February 1929, 212; Athletic Council Minutes, 12 February 1929, 214; Athletic Council Minutes, 22 October 1929, 227; Athletic Council Minutes, 25 November 1929, 229, located in the Conference Room of the University of Texas Athletic Director’s Office; Response to Chicago Daily News Almanac Questionnaire, 15 July 1936, (“Questionnaires, September 1, 1936—,”” VF 18/a.a), University of Texas President’s Office Records, 1907-1968, CAH, UTA; Brad Austin, “‘College Would Be a Dead Old Dump Without It': Intercollegiate Athletics in East Tennessee During the Depression Era,” Journal of East Tennessee History, (1997): 46-47.


21 February 1930 Minutes, Book 2, 300-301, (Box 1, Series IV), Records of the Board of Regents, UML; 25 May 1931 Minutes, Book 2, 354, (Box 1, Series IV), Records of the Board of Regents, UML; “Athletic Building to Be Dedicated,” Maryland Alumni News (January 1932): 1.

For the best example of a school that did choose to abandon its “big time” program, see Robin Lester, Stagg’s University: The Rise, Decline, and Fall of Football at the University of Chicago (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994).


“Meeting of the Board of Regents, 10 May 1929 (Book 2, Box 1, Series 4), Records of the Board of Regents, Special Collections, UML; H. C. Byrd to Craig Taylor, 28 December 1932, ("Correspondence, 1932, October-December," Box 3, Series 1), Papers of Harry C. Byrd, Special Collections, UML; “Spring Sport Hope at Maryland Dimmed by Banking Problem,” Washington News 7 March 1933; H. C. Byrd to S. V. Sanford, 2 March 1933, ("Southern Conference, 1933," Box 10, Series 2), Papers of Geary Eppley, Special Collections, UML.


Summary of Net Football Receipts 1928 to 1937,” (“Intercollegiate Athletics, 1936-1937,” VF 5/E/B), UT President Office Records, 1907-1968, CAH, U.T.A. The net football receipts fell from roughly $104,000 in 1930-31 to $85,000 in 1931-32, to $69,000 in 1932-33, bottoming out at $45,000 in 1933-34. This last total was a mere 43 percent of the 1930-31 total. According to the website for the American Institute for Economic Research (A.I.E.R), the 1933-34 total was worth $57,807 in 1930 dollars. See American Institute for Economic Research, A.I.E.R. Inflation Calculator available online: <http://www.aier.org/cgi-bin/cotcalculator.cgi>, [15 August 2001].


26 J. W. Coombs to Thomas S. Shibe, 28 November 1932, ("Southern Conference, 1932 March-December," Box 10, Series 2), Papers of Geary Eppeley, Special Collections, UML.

27 See "Excerpts from Minutes of Meeting of the Directors of Athletics of the Intercollegiate Conference, Friday December 4, 1931 at the Sheraton Hotel in Chicago," ("Intercollegiate Conference—Athletic Director’s Correspondence, 1930-1938"); Ralph W. Aigler, "Financial Aspects of the University’s Athletic Program," ("Addresses and Articles: 1931-1941," 9/e-1/1), Director of Athletics, TOSUA. Again, according to the A.I.E.R., deflation made the $515,000 the equivalent of $152,000 the equivalent of $189,722 in 1929 dollars.

28 "The Ohio State University Athletic Department Consolidated Statement of Receipts and Expenditures," 1-2; "Detail of Football Receipts," 1-2, and "Projected Budget," 1 all in "The Ohio State University Athletic Department, Financial Statements," 27 April 1936, ("Athletic Board: Minutes: September 1934-June 1940," 9/e-1/1), Director of Athletics, TOSUA.

29 "The Ohio State University Athletic Department Consolidated Statement of Receipts and Expenditures," 1-2; "Detail of Football Receipts," 1-2, and "Projected Budget," 1 all in "The Ohio State University Athletic Department, Financial Statements," 27 April 1936, ("Athletic Board: Minutes: September 1934-June 1940," 9/e-1/1), Director of Athletics, TOSUA.

30 "The Ohio State University Athletic Department Consolidated Statement of Receipts and Expenditures," 1-2; "Detail of Football Receipts," 1-2, and "Projected Budget," 1 all in "The Ohio State University Athletic Department, Financial Statements," 27 April 1936, ("Athletic Board: Minutes: September 1934-June 1940," 9/e-1/1), Director of Athletics, TOSUA. The $129,000 in 1932-33, according to the A.I.E.R., was equal to $169,839 in 1928. Even with this adjusted figure, the total drop was more than sixty percent from the 1927-28 and the 1929-30 totals.


33 "Is Football Interest Waning?" Journal of Health and Physical Education 2 (December 1931): 22. [see also Thelin, Games Colleges Play, 26-27.

34 Thelin, Games Colleges Play, 77-78; Edward Crane to H. Y. Benedict, 20 October 1932 ("Intercollegiate Athletic Council, 1930-1932," VF 5/E.b), University of Texas President Office Records, 1907-1968, CAH, UTA; "Summary of Receipts and Disbursements for the Period September 1931 to April 1, 1932," 2. ("Intercollegiate Athletic Council," VF 5 E/B), University of Texas President Office Records, 1907-1968, CAH, UTA.


36 "Yale Tilt to Test Mettle of Eleven," Maryland Alumni News (October, 1930), 1; "Information About Football Tickets," Maryland Alumni News (September, 1931), 3.
Robert G. Sproul to W. W. Monahan, 4 March 1935 ("1935:500," CU-5, Series 2), Office of the President Papers, BL, UCB; Thelin, Games Colleges Play, 55-56. The University of California was only one of many institutions that looked to Harvard and Yale for leadership or guidance. In this letter, UC President Robert G. Sproul asked director of men's physical education to explain in more detail a recent Harvard, Yale, and Princeton agreement regarding intercollegiate athletics. Sproul wrote, "It would aid me greatly if you could find time in the near future to draft a set of rules and regulations for the U of California, similar to those set forth in the Harvard U. booklet, for instance. The whole question of our athletic policy is to be up for discussion and determination in the near future, as we go out to select a new football coach, and I should like to have your ideas in definite and concrete form and to put as many of them as possible into effect in our future athletic program." Robert G. Sproul to Frank Kleeberger, 26 November 1930, (1930:371, Series 2, CU-5), Office of the President Papers, BL, UCB. In 1935, Sproul tried to help negotiate a crew competition with a joint UCB and UCLA team rowing against a combined Harvard-Yale or Oxford-Cambridge team. When it was clear that this would not occur, Sproul encouraged the A.S.U.C. general manager to find two other "first-class universities" against which the combined California teams could compete.


Information for this paragraph and the following graph comes from the Summary of Receipts and Disbursements" for the 1930-31, 1931-32, 1932-33, 1933-34, and 1935-36 years. The information for 1934-35 came from a similar document with a different name, "Receipts and Disbursements." The statements covering the years 1930-34 are located in "Intercollegiate Athletics, 1932-34," VF 5/E.B, University of Texas President Offices Records, 1907-1968, CAH, U.T.A. The remaining documents are located in "Intercollegiate Athletics, 1934-35" and "Intercollegiate Athletics, 1935-36," VF 5/E.B, University of Texas President Office Records, 1907-1968, CAH, UTA.

"Detail of Football Receipts," in "The Ohio State University Athletic Department: Financial Statements," 27 April 1936, ("Athletic Board: Minutes: Sept. 1934-June 1940," 9/e-1/1), Director of Athletics, TOSUA. In 1931, when the O.S.U. Athletic Board was discussing the possibility of playing a game against Notre Dame and donating the proceeds to charity, a guest argued that such a game in Cleveland would attract 100,000 fans willing to pay three dollars each for tickets. Although the game never materialized, surely the members of the Athletic Board did not forget the revenue potential such a game offered. See Ohio State Athletic Board Minutes, 2 November 1931, 170-171.


Ohio State University Athletic Board Minutes, 22 February 1932, 191. ("Athletic Board: Minutes: 1927-1934," 9/e-1/1), Director of Athletics, TOSUA.

"Number of Tickets Sold," in "The Ohio State University Athletic Department: Financial Statements," 27 April 1936, ("Athletic Board: Minutes: September 1934-June 1940," 9/e-1/1), Director of Athletics, TOSUA.

"Number of Tickets Sold," in "The Ohio State University Athletic Department: Financial Statements," 27 April 1936, ("Athletic Board: Minutes: September 1934-June 1940," 9/e-1/1), Director of Athletics, TOSUA.
46 L. W. St. John to Edward H. Laurer, 6 May 1932, (“Intercollegiate Conference—Athletic Director’s Correspondence, 1930-1938,” 9/e-1/9), Director of Athletics, TOSUA.

47 University of Texas Athletic Council Minutes, 7 June 1933, 333, and 12 June 1934, 358. University of Maryland president H. C. Byrd maintained his interest in athletics long after he left the sidelines. In 1938, Byrd wrote to U.M.’s athletic director, Geary Eppley, explaining why he thought some upcoming games deserved higher ticket prices than others. As Byrd saw it, “the idea of charging $1.65 and $1.10 for the Western Maryland game, with the situation that now exists up there, and $1.50 and .75 for the games with Virginia and V. M. I., and $1.65 and $1.10 for the Georgetown and W. & L. games, cannot be sustained by any reasonable measure. . . . it seems to me that if the Georgetown game is going to be worth anything, it should be a $2.00 game. Furthermore, it would seem to me that the Homecoming Game could well be a $2.00 game.” See H. C. Byrd to Geary Eppley, 24 August 1938, (“Football, 1937-39,” Series 2, Box 5), Papers of Geary Eppley, SC, UML.


49 For the specific reference to the amount necessary for football to support itself, see Geary Eppley to Jamison Swarts, December 1937, (“Contract, 1939,” Series 2, Box 3), Papers of Geary Eppley, SC, UML. To get a sense of the range of contracts see the entire run of “Contracts” folders in the same collection. During the 1930s, most Maryland football contracts offered guarantees of $1-5,000 and carried the provision that the teams would split the net proceeds if they exceeded the guaranteed amount.

50 J. P. Hess to Paul J. Kruesi; Montgomery, Threshold of a New Day, 360-361.


53 Pollard, History of Ohio State, 302, 305. For a fuller discussion of the wrangling over the budget cuts demanded by the Board of Trustees and resisted by the Athletic Board, see the Ohio State Athletic Board Minutes, 4 August 1931, 20 August 1931, and 23 November 1931, (RG 9/e-1/1), Director of Athletics. See also “Record of Proceedings of the Board of Trustees of the Ohio State University,” 6 August 1931 and 9 October 1931. The 9 November 1931 minutes contain the Trustees’ acceptance of the Athletic Board’s proposal to follow university salary reduction guidelines only with money derived directly from the university. For example, athletic director St. John, was originally budgeted to make $9,000 in 1931-32, with $5,500 coming from his salary as a university professor and $3,500 coming from the Athletic Board for his service as athletic director. Under the accepted salary cuts, the $3,500 remained untouched, but St. John forfeited 10% of his university salary, leaving him with a total salary of $8,450. The Ohio State University Monthly 23 (1932): 367.

54 “The Ohio State University Athletic Department Consolidated Statement of Receipts and Expenditures,” 1-2.


University Of Texas Athletic Council Minutes, 22 January 1931, 265; Minutes of Executive Session, 30 January 1929, ("1:6," CU-282), University of California, Berkeley, Associated Students Records, BL, UCB; Minutes of Finance Committee Meeting, 5 May 1930, ("2:5," CU-282), University of California, Berkeley, Associated Students Records, BL, UCB; Minutes of Finance Committee Meeting, 4 March 1931, ("2:5," CU-282), University of California, Berkeley, Associated Students Records, BL, UCB.

Minutes of Executive Session, 12 May 1933 ("1:6," CU-282), University of California, Berkeley, Associated Students Records, BL, UCB.

For the references to Price’s salary adjustments see Minutes of Executive Session, 3 December 1930, 8 April 1931, and March 1932, ("1:6." CU-282), University of California, Berkeley, Associated Students Records, BL, UCB; for the assistant football coaches’ salaries, see the same record group, Minutes of Executive Session, 11 February 1931 and 28 March 1932.

Minutes of Executive Session, 21 April 1937 and 24 April 1939, ("1:7," CU-282), University of California, Berkeley, Associated Students Records, BL, UCB.

“1932-33 Athletic Salaries (Total from all University Sources),” (“Intercollegiate Conference: Salary Comparisons: 1929-1933," 9/e-1/12), Director of Athletics, TOSUA. These averages are slightly inflated because some of the salaries reflect money received as compensation for serving as an assistant coach in another sport. For example, at Indiana University, the head football coach was also the head track coach, but his entire $5,000 salary was reported in the football coach salary table. “Ohio State University, Salaries of Intercollegiate Athletic Staff,” (“Intercollegiate Conference: Salary Comparisons: 1929-1933," 9/e-1/1), Director of Athletics, TOSUA.; Pollard, *Ohio State Athletics*, 152.

Montgomery, *Threshold of a New Day*, 347-350; Austin, “College Would be a Dead Old Dump Without It,” 50.


Pollard, *Ohio State Athletics*, 179; *The Ohio State University Monthly* 24 (1933): 122-123.

Pollard, *Ohio State Athletics*, 194, 208, and 245: Athletic Board Minutes. 23 November 1936, 4, (“Athletic Board: Minutes: September 1934-June 1940,” 9/e-1/1), Director of Athletics, TOSUA.

Pritchett, 30 June 1939 ("Correspondence, 1937-1942," Series 2, Box 2), Papers of Geary Eppley, SC, UML. In 1938, Eppley had written to Pritchett, the athletic director at the University of Virginia that "We have been considering the whole question of minor sports here at Maryland, and, in order to give more students an opportunity to represent the Institution in intercollegiate athletics, I have been thinking about recognizing soccer, golf, wrestling, fencing, etc. as minor sports." See Geary Eppley to Norton Pritchett, 7 June 1938, ("Football, 1937-1939," Series 2, Box 5), Papers of Geary Eppley, SC, UML; "Outstanding Contributions of the Men's Department of Physical Education for the Biennium 1938-1940," ("Correspondence, 1937-1942," Series 2, Box 2), Papers of Geary Eppley, SC, UML.

70 Pollard, Ohio State Athletics, 152-153.

71 Sperber, Shake Down the Thunder, 285-286, 326, 384.


73 For example, by 1935, the UTA Athletic Council was recording its dissatisfaction with Chevigny's financial management in the official council minutes. See 24 May 1935, 374. University of Texas Athletic Council Minutes, 10 January 1937, 427-428, University of Texas Athletic Director's Office. Quotation is on page 428. Whittingham reported that the state legislature had to approve Bible's salary and raised the university president's salary so that it would be proportional to Bible's. Whittingham, Saturday Afternoon, 53.

74 For example, the University of Texas earned $4,500 from its broadcast contract for the 1938-39 football season; whereas that same year, the University of Tennessee earned only $2,500 from radio broadcasts of its games. Even as late as 1943, the University of California was to receive only $8,500 for the broadcasts of its games, despite wanting as much as $85,000 in 1935 for the broadcast rights. See University of Texas Athletic Council Minutes, 31 March 1938 450; University of Tennessee Athletic Board Minutes, 22 April. 1938; A.S.U.C. Finance Committee Minutes, 13 August 1943, ("2:9," CU-282), Associated Students Records, BL, UCB; and A.S.U.C. Finance Committee Minutes, 25 February 1935. ("2:6." CU-282).

75 University of Texas Athletic Council Minutes, 6 February 1929; 2 October 1934; 3 January 1936.

76 University of Texas Athletic Council Minutes, 21 February 1935; 24 October 1938; 4 January 1937.

77 "The Ohio State University Athletic Department: Financial Statements."
CHAPTER 3

COMPETING VALUES: THE IDEOLOGIES BEHIND MEN'S INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

"The question is not so much whether athletics in their present form should be fostered by the university, but how fully can a university that fosters professional athletics discharge its primary function." Howard Savage, author of American College Athletics, 1929.

"One-half million attended seven games where athletes were subsidized. Less than one-half that number attended fifty games where the athletes were pure but not much athletes. The public don't care how you get to college. It's how you are going to get from the forty-yard line across the goal line that interests them." Will Rogers, 1929.

"It is my firm belief that the fundamental organization of athletics here and elsewhere renders its control impossible as a wholesome educational influence." Frank Kleeberger, Director of Men's Physical Education, University of California, 1930.

"'Ideals' seems to me to be a rather lofty word to use in connection with intercollegiate athletics. What about ideals of duck hunting or of chess playing or of backyard gardening? Pleasant and healthful outdoor activity is involved in all these..." H. Y. Benedict, President, University of Texas, 1932.

"Through our athletic programs, we can help to inculcate in our boys the American spirit. We can refuse to be influenced by the soft idealists. We can let the world know where we stand and what we are doing." John Griffith, Commissioner of the Big Ten, 1939.

The leaders of American colleges and universities faced a tremendous number of challenges, financial and otherwise, during the 1930s. The conditions of the decade forced these officials to make tough decisions based on identified priorities, just as their elected representatives had to do. The administrators of American public universities were often dissatisfied with the options the legislative decisions and funding levels
afforded them, frustrated by greater public expectations and lesser public support. Despite these demands and restrictions the university administrators still fought to preserve the universities' reputations, their standards, their faculty members' morale, and the public's trust. The nature of their responses to these challenges derived from their answers to a more central question: what is the central duty of a public university? These leaders struggled to fulfill their mission of preparing the nation's next generation of business, political, and social leaders, and they tried to do so with all aspects of the university including, and in many respects especially, athletics.

American universities and their athletic programs came under ideological assault on two fronts during the Depression. One set of attacks came from those groups of faculty and students who were upset by what they viewed as the propensity of schools to structure themselves in alliance with those Americans who would continue a socio-economic system disadvantaging important groups. Another type of attack came from groups and individuals who criticized the growing commercialism of college athletics and who questioned the education values of the programs. The trials of the Great Depression and its accompanying social conflict led athletic leaders to reaffirm and emphasize a positive ideology of competitive men's sport that emphasized the social and personal lessons athletics could teach young men. The university officials also linked the spread of competitive values to the desired maintenance of a traditional, laissez-faire capitalist social order. The effect was to politicize athletics, associating America's school sporting culture with leadership and corporate forms, as well as national vigor and strength. In the eyes of athletic organizers and administrators, competitive sports were especially important as a bulwark against radicalism and disunity in general and against
socialism and communism in particular. Their association of sports and traditional democratic values served to defend intercollegiate athletics against the reform impulses epitomized by the 1929 Carnegie Report and the social and economic pressures brought on by the Depression.

During the 1930s, university presidents had to articulate their views of the role of state universities, often defending the universities' activities department by department. One category of university activity, more than all others, received increased scrutiny: intercollegiate athletics. During the 1930s, American college and university officials had multiple reasons to reconsider their institutions' commitments to "Big Time" intercollegiate athletics. The 1929 release of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching's scathing *American College Athletics* coupled with the onset of real financial difficulties in the early 1930s gave university administrators substantive reasons to reevaluate the role and function of intercollegiate athletics. Their conclusions were not unanimous, but the breadth of the reaction's diversity reveals why this uniquely American institution survived the Depression.

Although leaders across the nation identified and criticized numerous unsavory practices connected to intercollegiate athletics, including wooing players with money and job offers, university administrators almost never recognized such improprieties in their own institutions. While many Americans argued that intercollegiate athletics produced numerous benefits, critics contended that these programs were the least "educational" parts of the university. Still, even in most critics' eyes, athletics remained an essential part of the modern American university. Even as people inside and outside the academy
pointed out the corruption of intercollegiate athletics, very few seriously proposed completely abandoning the existing system. Even if they were not going to jettison the games, officials still had to justify keeping them. What emerged from the reconsideration of intercollegiate athletics was an interlocking structure of justifications, rationalizations, and accommodations, all of which worked together to buttress the institution of intercollegiate athletics against the most forceful criticism it had received since the early 1900s when the outrage over football violence reached Theodore Roosevelt’s White House and led to the creation of the N.C.A.A.¹

Public university presidents and officials saw the protection and perpetuation of democracy as the fundamental duty of the universities. As public institutions, according to the presidents, the universities should serve the general populations of the states by educating their youth, preparing them for productive lives, and by coordinating other research and service programs that could benefit the states’ citizens. According to historian Frederick Rudolph, American universities began to reemphasize their commitments to public service and to democracy in the 1920s. This desire to meet the needs of the general public in a prosperous decade resulted in the creation of numerous new schools of business and public administration. During the 1930s, as they needed the support of the taxpayers and legislators, the universities had no choice but to promote aggressively their abilities to aid the states’ residents. These schools continued to prepare business students for leadership, just as they explained the tangible benefits of their research programs and argued that athletics could help prepare young men mentally for the competitive social and business arenas that they would soon enter.²
If university officials had faced only budgetary problems during the 1930s, they might not have perceived a widespread threat to the university's and country's values or tried to use all available means, including athletic programs, to preserve these core values. Instead, the 1930s proved a tumultuous decade for American students, faculty, and administrators, and this national sense of campus crisis and the seemingly constant state of turmoil, caused many officials to see almost any questioning of the status quo as a direct challenge to the university's, the country's, and their own, stability and legitimacy. Athletic officials tried to preserve for their male students competitive ideas and programs, designed to teach them the diligence, determination, and competitive zeal necessary to succeed in a modern business environment, while at the same time preserving a vital sense of campus community. They made their case in public pronouncements and in private letters, but they would find that their task was not an easy one during the 1930s.

Part of their difficulty lay in the number and intensity of attacks on some traditional ideas and customs that arose from the suffering of the Depression. The 1930s witnessed the invigoration of a politics suspicious of the traditional interests of established institutions; attacks on compulsory military training, for example, swept across the nation's campuses as student groups challenged the conventions of tying the manpower needs of the military services with higher education. At many institutions, athletics got caught up in the maelstrom. The controversies of the early 1930s prompted one historian of Ohio State to label the year 1930-1931 "one of turmoil and trouble for the University from without and within." During that academic year, the student Liberal Club protested against the compulsory military drills required by the University. This led
to a faculty vote in favor of optional military drilling, the threat of intercession by the state legislature, and a reversal of the faculty vote. These challenges to military drilling on campus were part of a national phenomenon that fed societal perceptions of a student culture opposed to "American" values and institutions. At Berkeley, a student "Anti-War Committee" promoted participation in a national peace strike in April 1935, the same year that university president Sproul reported to his colleagues that "our experience here over the years has more and more convinced us that military training as maintained under the R.O.T.C. is a valuable asset to the University." Berkeley police officers arrested the Anti-War Committee's leaders for violating a local law regulating leaflet distribution, and the vocal students received no assistance or support from the university's Associated Students organization. Shortly thereafter, more than 2,000 students gathered to protest against war and militarism, but according to one report, only about 10-15 percent of the attendees went to participate in the rally. The others just went to watch. This drama occurred at an embarrassing time for the university because the student radicals were drawing attention to themselves precisely when the state legislature was discussing the university's budget.4

The California student protests continued, as did the problematic association of the university with radicalism. In his Presidential Report covering the years 1932-34, California president Robert G. Sproul entitled one section, "Student Body Represents Sound Americanism," in which he explained that the university had told all students that "if you don't believe in America and American institutions, you have no place in the University of the State." Sproul acknowledged, however, that in a student population of almost twenty thousand, the UC system indeed harbored "youths tinged with disloyalty."
His belief that the university and the state must respect these students' rights to free speech did not please all Californians, nor did the continuing activities of these allegedly "disloyal youths." In 1936, U.C. students voted by more than a 2:1 ratio to end compulsory R.O.T.C. training, but the Regents did not submit to the students' wishes, maintaining the program as it existed. By 1937 the A.S.U.C. had a Peace Committee, and it sought unsuccessfully to rebut the Regents' arguments for requiring R.O.T.C. training.

The challenges to military training and institutional support of the armed forces also surfaced on the East Coast as officials at the University of Maryland suffered even greater headaches over the issue of mandatory R.O.T.C. training. In 1935, freshman Ennis H. Coale, a devout Methodist and a practicing pacifist, along with a friend asked for an exemption from the mandatory military training at Maryland. President Pearson, with the consent of the Regents, promptly expelled the students for their insubordination, prompting the two to sue the university for re-admission with a R.O.T.C. exemption. This case brought national attention to College Park as it became a test case, making its way through the judicial system to the Supreme Court, with the Methodist church and the A.A.U.P., among others, supporting the petition, and the New York Times and the R.O.T.C. backing the university's decision and decrying the case as a part of a "carefully planned Communist campaign."

The Supreme Court did not agree to hear the University of Maryland case, essentially affirming the Appeals Court's decision that in a free country the students were free to earn their degrees elsewhere. Further south, in Knoxville, the UTK League for Industrial Democracy, an organization connected to the National Socialistic Party, also
protested the mandatory R.O.T.C. training. Unsurprisingly, this organization’s arguments did not convince the president of the University of Tennessee, James Hoskins. Hoskins wrote in 1935 “the mental and physical alertness, the poise, confidence, and self respect obtained through military training make it worth while.”

Student activists proved unable to attract a large following in Knoxville; as part of a national strike against war, only 29 Tennessee students gathered. Three of these were newspaper reporters, and many more were drawn more by the novelty of the event than its ideological content.

As comments alleging a Communist conspiracy in College Park, Berkeley, and Knoxville illustrate, during the 1930s many Americans remained ever vigilant for any signs of radicalism, especially at public universities. University administrators accordingly acted to squelch student activism seen as leftist. At Ohio State in 1931, the Free Voice, a student newspaper that challenged the university’s policies in many areas briefly emerged and helped inspire the protest against compulsory military training. Although student protests and publications occasionally presented a leftist face to the public, official OSU activities and ceremonies conveyed a different message, one much less critical of the nation and its difficulties. Some of these activities served as fodder for the promotion of a jingoistic American patriotism, and athletics were often central to this endeavor. For instance, the president of the American Nationalist Confederation, "a Coalition of Anti-Communist Organizations," wrote to U.C.B. president Sproul and described how 68,000 spectators at an Ohio State game responded to the playing of the national anthem: "at that time were we convinced, that in spite of all the forces of unrest throughout the world, here was one people that would still devote their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor to the maintenance of those high principles of Liberty,
The connection between athletics and the preservation of a certain brand of “American values” was anything but coincidental at Ohio State and at most other American universities. At Maryland, presidents Pearson and Byrd also kept a close watch on the activities of liberal students on their campus and across the nation. Pearson maintained a clipping file of activities he viewed suspiciously. One, for example, was a Baltimore Sun story entitled “Kansas Students Dance with Negro Girls and Lose Social Privileges,” and another was “The Searchlight: Data on Subversive Movements Against the American Government, Political and Labor Radicals, Communists and the ‘Pinks.’” The Sun story about the Kansas dance emphasized the importance of the Y.M.C.A. as a facilitator of racial-mixing. Dating back to the mid-1920s, Pearson was especially alarmed with the “Alleged Radical Drift of Y.M.C.A.” Throughout the 1930s, Pearson and his successor Byrd monitored campus speakers and groups’ activities closely, just as they continued to correspond with the anti-radical Better America Federation and other similar groups as they sought to contain and understand such “anti-American forces such as the A.C.L.U.”

At California, student radical activity brought on public relations controversies throughout the decade. There, voices from the left were heard loudly and clearly, both across the campus and around the state. In 1931, the UC Social Problems Club, loosely connected to the National Student League (NSL), argued that the “extracurricular activities of university students should not be restricted to football, fraternities, sororities, and teas,” but should also include substantive political action. Other student organizations at Berkeley included the Young People’s Socialist League and the Young
Communist League. Although university president Sproul thought that the protests, strikes, and rhetoric of these student groups brought trouble for the university, and although he sanctioned measures designed to limit their visibility and influence on campus, he did not try to silence them completely.\textsuperscript{14}

However, in 1934, in the context of campus turmoil, state-wide labor unrest, and an election with a former Socialist, Upton Sinclair, campaigning to “End Poverty in California,” Sproul delivered a series of speeches intended to highlight his personal anti-radicalism. Sproul, however, would not go along with suspensions of U.C.L.A. student officers who had violated their university’s rules regarding political discussions. This stance prompted the Los Angeles \textit{Evening Post} to credit Sproul for recognizing that not everybody “with an independent idea is a Communist.” Sproul’s actions, along with the continued student agitation, persuaded many Californians that their state university was a seedbed for subversive activity.\textsuperscript{16}

In addition to sharing political upheaval, many American universities faced racial unrest during the 1930s, with the challenges to the existing norms strengthening many administrators’ beliefs that they faced a general political and social crisis. The activities of the Associated Students of the University of California combating racial discrimination certainly would have been enough to convince officials at Tennessee, Texas, and Maryland that anti-American forces were at work in Berkeley. In 1939, after a local athletic club had denied entry to two students of Japanese ancestry wanting to attend a dance, the A.S.U.C. wrote the club with this request: “Because we feel that racial discrimination is a prime factor in undermining democracy, we ask that you adopt in the future a policy of non-discrimination in admitting people to your dining and dancing
When the club refused to adhere to the requested policy, the A.S.U.C. voted not to hold its Senior Banquet at the club.\textsuperscript{18} This type of principled stance against racial discrimination was conspicuously absent at the other schools, especially at the Southern schools of Maryland, Tennessee, and Texas, but also in the Midwest at Ohio State.

In Texas in 1932, the National Student League helped to publish an alternative student newspaper called \textit{The Spark}. This paper confronted the nation's and that state's social problems head-on, discomforting the university administration, which preferred to avoid politically unsettling social unrest. The front page featured a cartoon of college graduates standing in unemployment lines, an essay calling for workers and students to unite, a report on starvation in Austin, and an essay arguing that "college students and workers will be shot down to protect capitalist investments."\textsuperscript{19} The Regents were especially upset when the National Student League challenged racial segregation by prominently supporting "full social and political equality for Negroes and other minorities." One regent immediately proposed banning the NSL from the campus entirely.\textsuperscript{20} Another correspondent, writing as a "former student of the University and a Southern man" wanted president Benedict to know that he was "unequivocally opposed to the equality of the Negro race, and I regret to see the University foster directly or indirectly through any publications coming from its students that character of propaganda."\textsuperscript{21}

The fact that the agitators were from New York only exacerbated the outrage. Even President Benedict explained to the governor, among others, that \textit{The Spark} was not an authorized publication, that it certainly did not represent UT policies, and that calibrating the proper response was difficult. Benedict was willing to use force to suppress any
violent attempt to put these proposals into action, but he also recognized that deciding
“what limit to set on free discussion of changes to be accomplished by peaceful and
criminal means is a hard problem.” Benedict realized that one could destroy
democracy while attempting to save it.

While Texas roiled over the printed words of a few radical students, the
University of Maryland faced a much more serious challenge to its segregationist
practices during the 1930s. The University of Maryland was one of the first institutions to
face the young Thurgood Marshall in an integration court case. Since 1885, when an
African American had graduated from the UM law school, the institution had maintained
an informal, but firm, segregated status. The color line was de facto, not de jure, but it
was real nonetheless. The state helped support tiny Princess Anne Academy for its
African-American residents, but this institution did not offer college-level classes until
the late 1920s, and the Depression robbed it of any positive momentum it had gathered.
After 1932, the state provided a grand total of $600 for African-American Marylanders to
use when attending out-of-state schools open to them. Confronted with two applications
from African-Americans in 1933, University of Maryland vice president Byrd recognized
the precariousness of the university’s position as a whites-only institution without a
formal law against integration. He wanted the legislature to pass such a law before
disbanding, because, as he explained to a Chapel Hill law professor, he was afraid that
“unless we do [have such a law] we shall have some liberal minded judge granting a
Mandamus forcing us to accept some Negro student, upon receipt of which I feel sure
that some of us will go to jail.” Byrd did not get his favored law, but he did get his
feared court ruling.
In 1934, after working his way through Amherst, Donald Murray challenged UM’s exclusion of African Americans by applying to its law school. With Marshall’s advocacy, he won his case, matriculated and graduated from Maryland’s law school. In June 1935, the university registrar seemed to recognize the problem with the university’s intransigent stance, writing “it will take a long, long time ‘to educate’ the Whites to the fact that the Negroes have a constitutional right to equal educational opportunities in schools for Whites and this despite the fact that Negroes are taxed for the support of the institutions for Whites.” Although the registrar saw “glaring at [him] that fateful fourteenth amendment.” acting president Byrd was not willing to submit to arguments based on fairness, propriety, and the Constitution as easily. He wrote, in July 1935, “perhaps I shall have to go to jail, but I think we have got to keep the Negroes out. [Governor] Nice tells me he does not mind going to jail provided I go with him, so there is some moral support anyway.”

When Byrd and others tried to circumvent the ruling by increasing the out-of-state scholarship fund to $30,000 and by buying the Princess Anne Academy for $100,000, Marshall was not impressed. He informed Byrd that “the Negro citizens of the State of Maryland do not believe that this [increase] was actuated by any motive of generosity on your part or of any sincere wish to aid Negro students; but rather as an attempt to set up certain high-sounding provisions to attempt to exclude Negroes from the University of Maryland.” Marshall called on Byrd to “take the necessary steps to provide constitutionally for the higher education of Negroes according to the University of Maryland decision by either establishing a separate but equal State University for Negroes; or to admit Negroes to the University of Maryland.” University
administrators caught flak from advocates on both sides of the argument for either giving too much or not enough, and race and remained a contentious issue at the University of Maryland as officials there continued laboring to protect the status quo.28

Racial challenges also existed in the presumably more tolerant American Midwest. Although it was an integrated university, racial controversies also threatened the status quo during the 1930s at Ohio State. In 1931, the O.S.U. administration and trustees, in a controversial decision, dismissed a popular professor, Dr. W. D. Miller for his "sociological views." Miller had allowed white Ohio State female students to congregate, eat, and dance with African-American students while visiting nearby Wilberforce College. Miller's firing, according to historian of the university James Pollard, "quickly split the campus, with the faculty 'liberals' pitted against the 'conservatives' and with the administration strongly criticized for its actions." Not only did 132 faculty members officially protest Miller's removal, but the American Association of University Professors investigated the matter and sided with Miller's supporters. Along with the library budget and salary structure, academic freedom found itself threatened at Ohio State, even if football did not.29

Although Ohio State's percentage of African American students was very small by modern standards, (out of a student body of just under 10,000, only 250 African Americans, including Jesse Owens, attended O.S.U. in 1934), their presence was unsettling to many white people on the campus. In 1937, one year after Owens's Olympic triumphs, the campus Y.W.C.A. and the Socialist Club endorsed the formation of a campus N.A.A.C.P. chapter. This advocacy inspired the campus Anti-Negro Guild to distribute across campus leaflets, complete with such subtle titles as "THE KU KLUX
KLAN HAD THE RIGHT IDEA!!!." Administrators quickly identified the propagandists and spoke among themselves about the necessity of quick and decisive action. Urging prompt punishment, the Dean of Men, J. A. Park, reminded President Rightmire that "the University has been criticized, however unfairly, for its attitudes towards negroes and the circumstances of this case are widely known," and another school official wanted to punish the two culprits as a measure to stop the "waves of propaganda and counter-propaganda which beat about our heads constantly on the campus in economic, racial, and religious matters." The trustees took a different strategy in silencing the propaganda wars raging across the Columbus campus; with only two voicing dissent, they directed the abolition of the university's 12 person "Marxist Club."^°

Dissent over established race relations bubbled across the Midwest to challenge athletic policy. In 1937 athletic directors and administrators across the Big Ten also felt the heat of campus passions as they found themselves confronted with a petition for greater racial equality, at least in athletics. The Northwestern University Inter-racial Committee (including representatives from Northwestern's Peace Action Committee, Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., B'nai B'rith Hillel Organization, Socialist Club, and International Relations Club) in conjunction with representatives from student organizations at Ohio State, University of Iowa, Purdue University, the University of Minnesota, the University of Michigan, and the University of Chicago, asked the Conference's athletic directors to "rescind a so-called 'unwritten law' prohibiting the participation of Negroes in Big Ten basketball, swimming, and wrestling competition" at their March 8, 1937 meeting. The petitioning students argued that sports should teach desirable American values. They based their request in the language of competition and on the understanding that the racial
discrimination was "inconsistent with aims of the higher education and with the spirit of the Constitution of the United States as well as with the desire of the student body to be represented in athletics by its most qualified members, regardless of race or creed." The agenda for the March 8th meeting of the Big Ten's athletic directors did not include this issue among its ten items for discussion, and Ohio State continued to field all-white squads in these sports over the next ten years.31

It was in this cauldron that universities, their leaders, supporters, and other constituencies were rethinking and refining ideas about the role of a state university in a state's life and work during the 1930s. Critical reports about university athletics added another factor to this reconsideration. In the 1920s, the chief justice of the Supreme Court, ex-president William Howard Taft, publicly criticized the conduct of intercollegiate athletics; then, in 1929, the Carnegie Foundation released its highly critical and very public report *American College Athletics*.32 In the later 1930s, Western institutions had to address issues raised by the Atherton Report on Pacific Coast Conference athletic conditions. Although *American College Athletics* was by no means the only public statement criticizing the excesses of intercollegiate competition, it was the most extensive, most discussed, and most damning. It was also the one report all American institutions with "big time" intercollegiate athletics had to address.33

*American College Athletics*, based on three years of extensive research, opened with a damning preface by Henry Pritchett, the foundation's president, and supported its claims with twelve chapters and 349 pages of evidence and analysis. Historian John R. Thelin described the report as an "encyclopedic survey of conditions concerning
governance and finance of college sports, providing data that were sufficiently compelling to break the silence about the commercialization of college sports.\textsuperscript{34} Thelin also pointed out that although the report caused a great deal of public discussion about the desirability and necessity of athletic reforms, not much reform actually resulted from the discussion. The scope of the report, its critical tone, and its reams of compelling evidence forced administrators and athletics officials at American universities to reevaluate, if only briefly, their commitments to the status quo in intercollegiate athletics.\textsuperscript{35}

In the preface, Pritchett wrote, "the thoughtful reader who has become aware of the transformation of college sports into professional athletic contests directed by paid coaches will wish to have answers to two questions. Who is responsible for the athletic transformation? And what is now to be done about it?"\textsuperscript{36} Pritchett concluded that no single party deserved censure for the professionalization of collegiate sport, writing that the general trend of society, the desires of influential alumni, the reluctance of university officials to take principled stands, along with actions based on good intentions had all factored into the equation. As for the second question, the report took a firmer stand:

The paid coach, the gate receipts, the special training tables, the costly sweaters and extensive journeys in special Pullman cars, the recruiting from the high school, the demoralizing publicity showered on the players, the devotion of an undue proportion of time to training, the devices for putting a desirable athlete, but a weak scholar, across the hurdles of the examinations—these ought to stop and the intercollege and intramural sports be brought back to a stage in which they can be enjoyed by large numbers of students and where they do not involve an expenditure of time and money wholly at variance with any idea of honest study."\textsuperscript{37}

The Carnegie Report backed up its critical generalizations with specific examples from across the nation. For example, the report praised Ohio State for keeping its
coaches occupied with many sports but criticized Texas, among other schools, for hiring a full-time coach at a substantial salary and expecting him to coach only one or two sports. It appeared to the authors that "the substitution of the academic costume for the football suit represents rather a yielding on the part of university authorities to demands made by influential and skillful coaches, whose services they fear to lose, than a desire to recognize physical education" as a legitimate academic enterprise. The authors also criticized some schools' willingness to spend lavishly on coaching staffs, identifying a group of high rollers, including Ohio State, Yale, Harvard, and Wisconsin, that spent between $35,400 and $84,600 annually on their athletic coaches. The report concluded that this extravagance "clearly reflect[ed] a distorted scale of academic and athletic values."

Suffering under the strains of highly publicized criticism and financial distress, it would have made sense for university officials across the nation to jettison whatever operations of the university they deemed unessential. Athletics might easily have fallen into that category. If Ohio State officials believed their students could persevere in the 1930s without any new library books, surely the same students could have received an education without a school-sponsored basketball or track team. There were however, many powerful practical and ideological reasons for maintaining big time athletic programs in the face of fiscal and ethical opposition.

First, as discussed in chapter two, institutional inertia helped protect the established programs. Once a sport had staked out a place within university budgets and calendars, and once jobs were created and filled, it became more difficult remove them,
especially since many universities still owed considerable sums for the boom in athletics construction of the 1920s. Secondly, even though almost every observer saw problems with intercollegiate athletics as they existed in 1929, most university officials refused to admit that the Carnegie Report's, and other exposes', allegations applied to their own institutions, instead pointing their fingers and accusations at other universities, identifying them as the real culprits, and thus denying responsibility for trying to "fix" the problems the report's authors identified.

A third and much more important reason for the preservation of intercollegiate athletic programs during the 1930s is directly related to the second one: just as most officials did not concede that their universities' athletic programs were "professional" or "corrupt," they also continued to argue that intercollegiate athletics contributed directly to the educational mission of the university. In other words, the athletic programs were not really extracurricular at all, but they were essential tools for preparing men and women for later life.

Fourthly, amid the crises of the Depression, some athletic officials began offering political defenses of intercollegiate athletics, arguing that the instruction in teamwork, discipline, competition, following rules, and handling setbacks without complaint were vital for the continuation of a laissez-faire capitalist social order. Finally, as the last chapter explains, university administrators had recognized very early on that it was easier to get alumni, prospective students, legislators, and other citizens interested in intercollegiate athletics than in geometric proofs, botany experiments, and literary criticism. Although not all of these rationalizations surfaced at the same time at the same place, national leaders voiced them all, and the justifications worked together to defend
intercollegiate athletics, and also the speakers' own jobs, from the forceful economic and ideological criticisms of the early 1930s.

Some of the motivations of maintaining intercollegiate athletic programs were more pragmatic than ideological. As athletic crowds multiplied during the 1920s, American universities built seats for the interested to occupy. Even though university officials ordered and poured much of the concrete in the 1920s, they still had to pay the bills in the 1930s. When institutions owed hundreds of thousands of dollars, as many did, closing shop was simply not an option. While some scholars have criticized female physical educators for seeking to protect their own jobs and positions of influence during this period, saying that they betrayed and exploited their elite female athletes by not advocating elite athletic competition, it appears that male physical educators, athletic directors, and coaches did the same thing by endorsing varsity athletic competition. Nowhere did an athletic official admit that his job was not important enough to preserve during an economic crisis. Indeed, although many agreed to salary cuts, albeit grudgingly, none volunteered to go and take his staff with him. In short, during the 1930s, the twin impulses of debt reduction and self-preservation worked in tandem with simple institutional inertia to protect most athletic programs and officials from the ideological and financial challenges of the day.43

There was no uniform response to the Carnegie Report, but almost every institution had to react to its descriptions and accusations and to address the larger issues the report raised, especially regarding the described overemphasis and commercialization of athletics. Texas president Harry Benedict had anticipated these charges in 1928 when he had made a well-publicized attack on the over-emphasis of athletics. Although the
Carnegie report echoed several of his criticisms, not every college official accepted them. Playing a semantic game, Maryland president Pearson wrote in early 1931 that “the question of over-emphasis on football is largely a matter of what is meant by over-emphasis.” After explaining that over-emphasis, if it indeed existed, was an administrative problem and should be addressed on a case-by-case basis, Pearson happily reported that “there is no over-emphasis on football in the University of Maryland.”

California officials had a slightly different, and more representative, interpretation of the problem. Although they were concerned about the attention given to intercollegiate athletics, especially football, and thought that colleges could do more to offset this interest, they believed that any perceived over-emphasis was the product of sportswriters and a “noisy minority of the student body and alumni.”

After the publication of the Carnegie Report, California leaders, particularly president Sproul, were also more willing than many of their colleagues to acknowledge privately the problem of commercialism in the supposedly amateur games, calling the existing levels of commercialism a “disgrace to American Universities.” In a separate letter that same year, Sproul warned that, without reform, “the end [of intercollegiate athletics] is not far off.” He argued that the professionalism and commercialism were turning people away from the college game and attracting only people with no real affiliation with the university. Sproul continued, arguing that “even those who are University men and women are coming to look on the contest as merely a great show.”

Given these general agreements with much of the report’s conclusions, it is unsurprising that California officials expressed great admiration for the report and its goals. Writing to a local high school student in early 1930, California’s then president
Campbell gave the report a very positive review, calling it “incomparably the best publication” about college athletics. Although Campbell thought that the report overstated at times and probably underestimated the problems at certain institutions, he still thought the report would “be of great value in correcting some of the exceedingly unfortunate policies followed in many educational institutions.” This recognition of real problems in the operation of intercollegiate athletics led California’s leaders to become firm advocates of the strong conference commissioners.

The conference system was one important preexisting bulwark against the criticism expressed in the Carnegie Report, with the nation’s conferences serving, in Thelin’s words, as “the crucial collective unit for instilling standards in college sports.” This does not mean that the University of Tennessee’s and the University of Maryland’s affiliation with the Southern Conference, the University of California’s membership in the Pacific Coast Conference, the University of Texas’s membership in the Southwestern Conference, and Ohio State’s membership in the Big Ten Conference insulated them from athletic improprieties, just that they had conference standards that worked, or were supposed to work, to create the proverbial level playing field. During the 1920s and 1930s, the N.C.A.A., despite the “national” part of its name, was not as powerful or as important to the daily operation of the individual programs as the regional athletic conferences were.

The Big Ten provided national leadership for other conferences. It was the first to hire a professional commissioner, John Griffith, and a professional staff; it also established what became national guidelines in the areas of athletic control, eligibility, and scholarships. The member institutions took the formation and enforcement of their
rules very seriously, and they were eager to report violations, at least those allegedly committed by their competition. Having a strong commissioner's office with the power to enforce findings and even to expel institutions served the Big Ten well during the 1930s as institutions sought to implement various reform measures and to prevent corruption.50

What happened in the Midwest through the Big Ten echoed through other regions where big time athletics was threatened by complaints of commercialism, corruption, and professionalization. The Big Ten's model inspired reform-minded officials across the nation to agitate for similar structures and powers in their conferences. For example, in 1930, California president Sproul wrote to his Dean of Men that he was "not at all satisfied with present [intercollegiate athletic] conditions, particularly in California, and unless strongly persuaded to the contrary [was] strongly disposed to lead a crusade for reform." This reform effort would begin with the "appointment of a commissioner with the widest possible powers, from whom may be expected an honest and vigorous attempt to clean up the athletic situation on the Pacific Coast, which [to Sproul] is deplorable and getting worse."51 During the 1930s, the P.C.C. hired a full-time commissioner, and in 1938 Sproul finally received what he had earlier desired, a monumental investigation of P.C.C. athletics and associated improprieties.52 Southern Conference officials debated the propriety and feasibility of hiring a commissioner during the early 1930s, but the schools could neither agree on the desirability of a strong commissioner nor afford to appoint one at the time.53

With his institution about to undergo intensive conference scrutiny in the late 1920s, the University of Tennessee's faculty advisor for athletics, Nathan W. Dougherty,
had a different interpretation of the Carnegie Report. In a seventeen-page summary and rebuttal of *American College Athletics*, Dougherty argued that Savage and the other authors revealed their biases against practical American universities beginning with the opening lines of the report that emphasized and lauded the European antecedents of American universities. In a chapter-by-chapter analysis of the report presented to the UTK president, Dougherty cast doubt on the report’s conclusions and characterized its interpretations as being overblown and inappropriate. For example, responding to the report’s position that large budgets for paid, professional coaches epitomized the “distorted scale of academic and athletic values,” Dougherty dismissed this conclusion with a metaphor: “This is a natural conclusion for an American business man but not a sound one for a College Professor. It might just as well be said that since the smoke of the locomotive can be seen farther than the locomotive that it is the most important part of the railway train.” He argued that coaching is a “specialized activity, and specialized service is always expensive.” While Dougherty was undoubtedly accurate with his assertion that specialized service was expensive, he never addressed why the university considered that service vital enough to justify the high cost; he just assumed that it should.

Other prominent Southern university leaders did articulate forceful arguments for the value of intercollegiate athletics during the 1930s. In January 1938, R. A. Fetzer, the University of North Carolina athletic director, and Howard W. Odum, the Director of the Institute for Research in Social Science and one of the most prominent sociologists in the nation, wrote to athletic directors across the South asking for detailed information. Odum and Fetzer explained that the Institute for Research in Social Science had spent the
previous ten to fifteen years conducting regional studies on Southern progress and institutions, contending in several reports that Southern institutions should be doing better with the facilities and abilities at their disposal. The Institute often used intercollegiate football as an "index to show how, when the southern institutions wanted to do something well, they did it." Football, then, in the eyes of some very accomplished scholars and educational leaders, had intrinsic value as a focal point for regional pride and as an example of regional accomplishment.  

The reaction of the officials at the University of Texas to the release of the Carnegie Report more closely resembled California's than Tennessee's. The November 1929 issue of The Alcade, the publication of the Texas Ex-Students Association, summarized the scope and findings of the report in one article, following it with another written by the director of athletics and giving "The Texas Side of It." Dr. H. J. Ettlinger noted that "while the report only covers the dark side of the picture, [Texans] must, nevertheless, admit that the facts as presented are true." Ettlinger continued, pointing out that "in the Southwest conditions in the past few years have been very bad," despite the numerous regulations designed to prevent the very violations and corruption American College Athletics documented. The Texas athletic director advocated following one of two paths to rectify the situation: one, change the rules to match existing practices or two, enforce the rules and punish those that need punishing. Either through permitted professionalism or through more rigidly enforcing amateurism, "the benefits of intercollegiate athletics" in creating loyalty to schools "must be preserved."

Like California, the University of Texas and its officials devoted a great deal of time and print space to discussing efforts to reform intercollegiate athletics. During the
late 1920s and early 1930s, *The Alcade* carried numerous articles on the Carnegie Report and the university’s response to it and on other investigations of the university’s practice of hiring athletes to serve as physical education teaching assistants. Most of these essays were substantive evaluations of arguments, featuring thoughtful analysis of the evidence offered, but not all were. Instead, some tried to illustrate, through humor and pseudo-science, the absurdity of advocating a single, rational program for intercollegiate athletics. In December, 1929, Texas president H. Y. Benedict vowed to “out-Einstein Einstein and out-Newton Newton” with his proposal of a gridiron based graphing system that would provide the solution to the “Great Super-Einstein Intercollegiate Athletic Problem.” Benedict used his graph to show that there existed an entire spectrum of rational opinions about the proper conduct and place of intercollegiate athletics, but that when charting these opinions, one would still be likely to be “irrational and absurd everywhere in all his opinions throughout the entire curve.” Impartial, disinterested reason and algebraic formulas could not alone, in Benedict’s eyes, account for all of the variables involved in administering and controlling intercollegiate athletics.

University officials across the nation shared Ettlinger’s and others’ belief that intercollegiate athletics, while problematic, were too valuable for universities to abandon, and they offered many reasons why. The authors of *American College Athletics* reported the colleges and universities had made progress over the previous three decades and implored their readers to “let that improvement continue—let [athletics’] physical, moral, and spiritual potentialities in the education of youth be clearly understood and sincerely acted upon, [so that] their value in our national life will be immeasurably enhanced.”
By removing commercialism from athletics, colleges and universities would go a long way toward realizing their potential, but Savage and the other authors demanded more. In their view, "the American college must renew within itself the force that will challenge the best intellectual capabilities of the undergraduate," recognizing that athletics did not prevent intellectual growth and that they could be a powerful socializing force, promoting "courage, independent thinking, cooperation, initiative, habits of bodily activity, and above all, honesty in dealings between man and man." By making athletics pure, officials would make them purposeful.

While many cited the intangible importance of athletics to creating communities, most defenders of intercollegiate athletics agreed that not all important lessons could be learned in a classroom, that universities should labor to create the types of competitive men that could lead America properly, men who valued teamwork, sacrifice for an ideal, and striving for victory. These university leaders echoed the sentiments of the Carnegie Report's authors and earlier idealists who presented athletic programs as a teaching tool, with the games and practices serving as additional laboratories for vital learning. According to a prominent line of argument, intercollegiate athletics served the universities' and nation's common good by teaching virtue to athletes, inspiring other students to participate in sports, and by showcasing positive attributes to all spectators. These justifications, and the dozens like them, drew upon a preexisting and prominent vision of competitive sport as a crucible of American values. As Mark Dyreson has argued, "progressive" Americans, living between 1880 and 1920, tried to use athletic programs and team sports to produce "civic virtue and national vitality." This desire to create a "sporting republic" was an attempt by the new middle-class to minimize the
problems of industrialization and modernization by teaching Protestant, professional, and republican values through sports. By focusing on the benefits of sound minds and bodies, regulated activity, and the ideals of “fair play” during competition, these idealistic reformers sought to foster social cohesion through sports.61

Dyreson also discussed the changes wrought by the emergence of a full-blown consumer culture in the 1920s. In this decade, as the wider Progressive movement faded from prominence, the belief that sports could serve as important and powerful social tools deteriorated as well. Citing such commentators as Frederick Lewis Allen and Mary and Charles Beard, Dyreson asserted that in the 1920s, Americans came to view athletics more as a distraction and a leisurely release than as a civilizing educational force, seeing sports more often “as an end and not as a means.” Although he conceded that the Progressive mentality persevered in a few places and minds, Dyreson argued that this belief system lost its significance as a social force during the 1920s.62

The understanding that athletics could inculcate desirable traits in collegians remained strong throughout the 1920s and beyond in American colleges and universities as the public and private statements of athletic officials illustrate. In 1922, the University of Michigan’s Fielding Yost argued that university athletics offered much more than mere “technical exhibitions.” Yost contended that college athletics had three “underlying aims . . . to develop and maintain the physical health of all the students; to promote recreation through self-expression, and a wholesome spirit of competition and rivalry; to form habits and inculcate ideals of right living.” Similarly, Big Ten Commissioner John L. Griffith defended intercollegiate athletics in 1929 by reasserting the thesis that “the main value of athletics lies in the fact that they serve to develop qualities that cannot be
measured by an intelligence or physical efficiency test.” Griffith explained that even spectators could learn valuable life lessons from observing intercollegiate athletics, just as he asserted that games taught participants to play by the rules, a vital skill in a democracy. However, Griffith did not offer in 1929, as he would in the 1930s, an unqualified defense of American democracy; instead, he wrote that some criticized college athletics merely because of its scale, arguing that “in a democracy such as ours we are apt to place a premium on mediocrity and to be suspicious of men, organizations and activities which are highly successful.” These comments display a persevering progressive attitude toward sport throughout the 1920s, but they do not include the explicit associations between intercollegiate athletics and the preservation of American business and political norms in the face of “radical” alternatives that dominated the correspondence of the 1930s.63

The argument that intercollegiate athletics could use competition to help prepare male students for the real world was not just a sophistic rationalization concocted by self-interested administrators to justify keeping programs popular with students and alumni, although not always with faculty members. Instead, not only was it the natural product of a long history of “character-building” claims for athletics, it was also the logical extension of the progressive educational theories of John Dewey. During the 1930s Dewey’s ideas found footholds in American universities. This new educational outlook stressed the importance of practical, as opposed to theoretical education, preparing students for life’s challenges through experience. This pedagogical theory lent itself well to ideological defenses of universities’ athletic programs. After all, many reasoned, where better could students experience the thrills of victory and the agony of failure than
on the athletic fields and courts, and where else could universities better teach students that life has rules, winners, and losers?  

In theory, then, intercollegiate athletics served as a vital teaching tool on university campuses, as an integral part of the undergraduate educational apparatus. In fact, according to the official and public pronouncements of the Southern Conference, "athletics are valuable only in so far as they serve fundamental educational purposes, namely, to develop leaders of the highest type." Similarly, University of Texas football and track coach Clyde Littelfield wrote for the Texas alumni publication in the early 1930s, "Athletics are, and should ever remain a contributory factor to this main object of college training" which was "to become better educated and become better fitted for life." To this end, Littlefield argued, intercollegiate athletes inspired other students to play sports, thereby exposing ever more students to life's lessons as taught through athletics. Moreover, "Athletics benefit even those who do not participate at all. By the example before them, all tend to hold in higher esteem of qualities of determination, service, loyalty, which are fostered by athletic competition."  

Nonetheless, California physical educator Frank Kleeberger spoke for many when he cautioned in an internal memo in 1930 that "the fundamental organization of athletics here and elsewhere renders its control impossible as a wholesome educational influence," the next week his own university president insisted to an outsider that the "football team . . . be a normal outgrowth of the institution and not an exotic flower grafted onto it." Even a critic such as Kleeberger admitted that he enjoyed the excitement athletics could bring to campus, but he also argued that football fever had too many side effects, including teaching dishonesty through the violation of established rules, focusing on the
money raised instead of proper morals taught and celebrating athletes above all other students, all in the name of education. Kleeberger thought that California had the opportunity in the early 1930s to "rebuild athletics . . . on a sound educational basis." but if the time was not yet at hand, he implored the president to establish real controls so as to "subdue the undesirable symptoms of the disease and accentuate the limited educational values inherent in the present system."68 Athletics could indeed teach students, but Kleeberger and others warned that students were learning the wrong lessons about celebrity, dishonesty, cheating, and the importance of money. As the Carnegie Report and rigorous self-studies in the 1930s illustrated all too well, the type of idealistic synthesis of the educational and athletic worked much better in theory than in practice. Nonetheless, despite Kleeberger's and like-minded critics' warnings, most defenders of intercollegiate athletics presented the programs as purveyors of positive lessons, or at least harmless diversions, that deserved a place on university campuses.

University officials became more anxious to promote certain habits and virtues as campus and national disruptions convinced them that these beliefs and practices were under attack. While many intellectuals, reformers, labor leaders, and politicians discussed and sought changes in the structure of American society and government as a means of meeting the crises of the depression, athletic officials across the country defended the established order and their position within it. They did so by expanding upon idealized images of competitive, democratic, and successful American athletes as the future leaders of capitalism and the saviors of Western Civilization.75 These athletic leaders built upon earlier beliefs linking competitive athletics and American values and
began using explicitly political rhetoric and arguments to make their point that intercollegiate athletics were important tools, not only for continuing the amateur tradition in American life, but for preserving competitive, democratic capitalism itself from its many serious challenges.

The connection between athletic competition and the preferred American way of life was not limited to the minds of aging Progressive reformers and self-interested athletic officials. Instead, throughout the 1920s and the 1930s, the rhetoric of competition helped provide the infrastructure for both political parties' platforms. Despite their disagreements about the proper role of government in regulating the economy and the social sphere, both the Democrats and the Republicans saw competition as a central component of the American system. Although some of his opponents saw President Franklin D. Roosevelt as a wild-eyed leveler, a "traitor to his class" who wanted to destroy the American capitalist system, he was not. In fact, many new left historians have since argued the exact opposite point, that Roosevelt served as one of industrial capitalism's most valuable protectors. As several scholars, including John Wong, have pointed out, many of Roosevelt's programs worked to buttress, not undermine, the American economic system. During the 1930s, many Americans looked to their national government for assistance, and most also expected the government to continue preparing America's youth for economic revival and for democratic participation. As Wong demonstrated, Roosevelt's W.P.A. kept alive the progressive model of using athletics and physical training to teach "proper" American values. During the 1930s, American university athletic officials did likewise, using laissez-faire rhetoric to marry athletic competition to the nation's capitalistic future.
The experiences of the Ohio State University and the Big Ten Conference during the 1930s provide an excellent example of this politicization of sports. Before the depression struck, OSU had built one of the largest and most successful athletic programs in the nation. When the crises of economic collapse mounted, however, the resulting pressures threatened the very continuation of intercollegiate athletics. Ohio State officials, led by Director of Athletics Lynn St. John, acting collaboratively with their counterparts in the Big Ten conference, sought to protect sports programs by coupling those programs to the safeguarding of particular values. In a revival and modification of the arguments of a previous generation of progressive reformers, Lynn St. John and his colleagues argued that colleges and universities could and should use intercollegiate athletic programs as tools to produce the business leaders, field generals, and virtuous citizens necessary to secure a safe, democratic and capitalist future for the nation. Their political rhetoric was both self-serving and highly charged by the ferment of the Great Depression, and the political associations they made would not disappear as most Americans returned to prosperity, and to a Cold War, in the 1940s, 1950s and beyond.

Clearly, by the late 1930s, even the most isolated athletic official could not have failed to notice the social upheaval and the challenges to the institutions of the day, challenges to community rooted in long-term social problems and challenges to the economic and political status quo sparked by the Depression. In the midst of this economic and social disruption, most American universities maintained, and even strengthened, their commitments to providing athletic opportunities for its student population. The question, then, is why this emphasis on seemingly extracurricular activities when the core of the university, the academic programs and infrastructures,
found themselves under financial siege?

One important answer is that the academic and athletic administrators did not regard athletics as extracurricular; instead, they presented the athletic experience as vital to the universities' duty to prepare the competitive leaders of a capitalist nation. With the continuation of men's intercollegiate athletic programs, leaders sought to preserve the political and social systems, not only of the university, but also of the nation, during a time of great unrest. Although Dyreson argued that the belief in sports as a social tool died out in the face of the emergence of a consumption-based mass society during the 1920s, the evidence from the 1930s suggests that many working in American universities maintained and came to reemphasize their faith in the ability of sports programs to shape the beliefs and habits of individuals to fit into a corporate, laissez-faire capitalist mold, to create a sense of community, and to teach American democratic values through competition. In the 1930s, however, the rhetoric became more politicized, as the officials drew sharp distinctions between an idealized competitive American way of life and the socialist and communist alternatives they saw threatening their campuses and their nation.  

In 1931 a discussion about the proper place of athletics in institutions of higher learning consumed the time of athletic directors and college presidents across the Midwest. On October 29, 1931, David E. Ross, a member of Purdue University's Board of Regents, delivered a controversial and widely discussed lecture criticizing the professionalism of college sports and the importance financial considerations had when setting policies and schedules. Ross claimed that "while the public apparently demands these [intramural and intercollegiate] contests it may be seriously doubted" that the state
legislatures would pay for them if asked. Ross declared that football stadiums "by long
odds, . . . [are] the most ineffective expenditure of money made for practical purposes,"
and continued to say that the lack of real public interest in minor sports made them very
difficult to finance. Nonetheless, as his fellow critic Kleeberger had done before, even
Ross acknowledged the positive influence intercollegiate athletics could have on a
university environment, calling them the best vehicle "for giving character and unity to
that vital thing we know as the spirit of an institution." Ross also lauded the ability of
intercollegiate athletics to foster citizenship, and to "inculcate in [athletes] ideas of
fairness, sportsmanship, and integrity." Despite some problems, athletics still appeared to
Ross to be essential tools for shaping competitive All-American boys.

None of the above seems very controversial or specifically related to the
Depression; in fact, Ross’s acknowledgements of the virtues of intercollegiate athletics fit
neatly into the well-established cannon of athletic defenses, just as his criticisms echoed
those voiced earlier. However, Ross concluded his speech with a call to remove
scheduling from the hands of those interested in gate receipts, and most threatening to
some, he asked that "those vested with authority . . . at least discuss conference pooling
of athletic contest funds." so that universities could continue the education of athletes on
and off the field without charges of professionalism.

These final thoughts did not find receptive ears in the Ohio State University
administration’s hallways or in the Big Ten Conference headquarters. Later that same
year, J. L. Morrill, OSU’s junior dean of education, hastily drafted a response to a
questionnaire based on Ross’s speech distributed by the Big Ten Conference.
Espousing his belief that athletic programs furthered the mission of the university,
Morrill contended that Ohio State's athletic programs were "of great value educationally to the members of the teams, the student body and the public, of the moral concept of loyalty to an ideal (represented by the University) and of self sacrifice for the sake of an ideal." 85

Morrill also defended the athletic administration and oversight system in place at Ohio State, rejecting any suggestions of impropriety. He argued that athletics, while treated as any other educational program of the University, received much more supervision and scrutiny than any other program, thus rendering athletics safe from all excess. In other words, it was the same, yet different. He agreed with Ross that football's role as the main revenue-generating sport was "unfortunate" but he declared it easily "defensible." Sidestepping a question about the salaries granted to "highly paid and highly professional" athletic department personnel. Morrill replied that the correct standard of evaluation should be the recipient's character, not his salary. Again. California's Kleeberger would have agreed with Morrill. Kleeberger argued in late 1930 that the university would be justified in spending any amount of money on a football coach if, and only if, that coach was a man of character and distinction. This critic of excesses in athletics contended "California should employ the best football coach available no matter that salary be demanded. A coach's salary is an insignificant item in the big business involved. No coach, however, head coach or assistant, should be employed whose reputation is that of a swash buckling bully or dissipated rounder." 86

Despite acknowledging the powerful hold athletics had on the general public and on alumni, Morrill denied that the publicity sports programs provided necessarily helped the University. He also mildly dismissed Ross's proposal of rotating schedules to remove the
Morrill’s valuations and defenses of Big Ten intercollegiate athletics fit nicely into a well-established pattern. He saw athletics as a vehicle for moral uplift that certainly belonged in American universities. Of course, people rarely, if ever, acknowledge their complete range of motivations to themselves, much less to others. The athletic administrators of the 1920s and 1930s must have wanted to protect college athletics, in part, in order to protect their own jobs. Moreover, some of the vehemence in Ohio State’s arguments against “collectivism” might have come from the fact that Ohio State, leading the conference in athletic revenue for much of the decade, would have had to share more of its wealth than others. Still, pragmatism aside, during the Depression, as they were surrounded by tremendous economic, racial, religious, and political challenges to the status quo, many of the nation’s athletic administrators imbued their work with explicit political implications. While Morrill couched his disapproval of Ross’s rotation idea in very moderate, apolitical terms, OSU Athletic Director Lynn St. John employed starkly political language to convey his disgust. St. John called Ross’ proposal to pool Conference athletic funds a “really wild idea” and “utterly foolish.” According to St. John, that idea, when combined with the rotating schedules plan, “border[ed] somewhat on rank communism of a dangerous type.”

St. John and Morrill were not the only high-ranking athletic officials to defend the status quo during the early 1930s, nor were they the only ones to frame their arguments in politically loaded terms. John Griffith, Big Ten commissioner, later N.C.A.A. president, and one of St. John’s very good friends, unsurprisingly shared many of St. John’s views as well as his method of expressing them. In a public response to Ross’s statements, Griffith
offered several business analogies, comparing universities' athletic programs to manufacturers' production lines. He stated that, just as in a business setting, the unprofitable lines (read: minor sports) might face abolition or at least reduction if the Depression grew much worse. Griffith also denied Ross's assertions that athletic administrators designed football schedules based on their profit potential, arguing that they emphasized, instead, "traditional games" which coincidentally just happened to attract the most attention and produce the greatest revenues. Maintaining these traditional rivalries was essential to maintaining public interest; therefore, rotating schedules would prove counterproductive. Griffith saved his strongest rhetoric for Ross's proposal that conference members consider pooling the Conferences athletic revenues to ensure all students equal opportunities and to prevent revenue-based schedules. Griffith dismissed this revenue-sharing plan as a "socialistic theory which our manufacturers and business men would not be willing to put into effect in terms of their own business." What would not be good for General Motors would not, in Griffith's eyes, be good for the Big Ten.

During the Depression American athletic directors and administrators further politicized their rhetoric by explicitly connecting Intercollegiate Conference policies and athletics to larger world events, making the public and private debates over the proper values of intercollegiate athletics carry even more importance. The correspondence among St. John, Griffith, and other conference athletic officials throughout the 1930s and the early 1940s reveals a shared vision of politics as well as athletics, highlighting the connections between the two fields as they traded swipes at Roosevelt and his policies. Griffith, for example, constantly included political discussions in his official
correspondence with the conference athletic directors. In one 1932 letter, Griffith told St. John about how Iowa’s voters had recently voted out a senator who had spent the previous ten years attacking the existing “capitalistic and economic system and by implication at least advocating the redistribution of wealth.” He followed that example with an “Exhibit B,” the story of an athletic conference removing a commissioner who had been critical of intercollegiate athletics. Griffith hopefully concluded his message with the belief that he and St. John might “witness an era of sanity in which the demagogues and the inveighers against the constructive systems of athletics and wealth will be less prominent than they have been.” During the 1930s, as consistent opponents of Franklin Roosevelt and the collectivism that he and the New Deal represented to them, Griffith and St. John would find their search for “sanity” to be a continuous struggle.

No statement better illustrates continuing connections conference and university officials made between politics and athletics than the following from a confidential memo entitled "Reconstruction" sent by Commissioner Griffith to Ohio State’s St. John:

I start by assuming that although the United States is in a temporary slump that she will come out of the slump. If there is a world war between the Orient and the Occident; if the nation’s economic structure is destroyed and a new social, economic and political philosophy takes the place of our present national philosophy then it will not be necessary for anyone to give heed to that which we have come to think of as college athletics. Our entire philosophy of athletics is inextricably interwoven into our American philosophy of life.

We are a capitalistic nation and so we believe in champions and championships. We believe, however, that the champions should win by fair means. As President Hoover has pointed out communism would hold the speed of the swiftest to that of the slowest. Is it not clear then that if we continue to hold to the American conception of competition that we are going to continue along familiar
Griffith continued his analysis by arguing that "wars, business depressions, and athletic problems" resulted directly from "human greed, disregard for the rights of others, arrogance, selfishness and suspicion." So, who were the culprits Griffith singled out in 1932? They were the Japanese for invading Manchuria, the bankers for lending unwisely just to draw interest, and football coaches for conducting unauthorized practices in violation of Conference rules. Griffith doubted the necessity of adopting "Ghandiism to lessen the chances of war" just as he challenged the need to "follow the Stahlin [sic] principles by way of guaranteeing every man three meals a day." Instead, he proclaimed, colleges must continue teaching the importance of competition, if not only for the American system, then to prevent young men from abandoning their pure amateur status to find competition and corruption in professional events. "The colleges must go on." Griffith exhorted, "or others will take their place."

Or worse yet, America itself would forget how to compete, relying instead on leaders who were promising Americans, in Griffith's words, that "they will give us security, that we won't have to pay for our sins, that they will share the wealth created by others with us, etc. etc." This was not anti-radical rhetoric intended to rouse a crowd and demonize an opponent. Instead, these were private and confidential expressions of the deeply held beliefs of the future N.C.A.A. president, as was Griffith's letter to Colonel G. L. Townsend, a retiring Ohio State athletic official and commandant of the Military Science Department. Griffith wrote, in 1938, "Aside from what you have meant to athletics at Ohio State and in the Conference, I have rejoiced that you were in charge of military affairs at Ohio State. The Pacifists and the crackpots from the lunatic fringe
have been very active in recent years and we need men such as you to help preserve an even balance of the ship of state."^94

While Commissioner of the Big Ten and president of the N.C.A.A., Griffith also voiced these ideas publicly, producing numerous patriotic and politically charged speeches and articles during the 1930s. St. John's collection of his friend's writings included, among many others, an Athletic Journal essay entitled "Athletics Exemplify the American Way" in which Griffith argued that "our form of democracy is a glorified athletic game." Having praised the importance Germany and Japan placed on coordinated physical education programs in 1922, the commissioner of America's most powerful athletic conference stressed in this essay the political importance of competitive college athletics to the United States. He argued that "since most people will agree that the American way is better for Americans than the Communist way, the Nazi way or the Fascist way, we will not discuss that point. Instead we would like to call attention to some similarities between the American way of life and the athletic way." Quoting Abraham Lincoln on the virtues of competition, Griffith argued that "1) Competition, 2) Rules governing competition, 3) Leveling up process, 4) Courage and the will to carry on" characterized both the American and athletic way of life. He concluded by exhorting his readers to "preserve the American way and let us exemplify it on the playing fields of our country."^95

In open letters to all Big Ten coaches, Griffith used much the same rhetoric. Emphasizing the importance of competition, he warned the coaches to take "one look at Europe today [to see] clearly what happens to a people grown soft. . . . If there are more softies in America than there are fighters, we will go the whole way to state socialism."
That was unthinkable to Griffith, but fortunately he again had a solution. "Through our athletic programs," Griffith wrote, "we can help to inculcate in our boys the American spirit. We can refuse to be influenced by the soft idealists. We can let the world know where we stand and what we are doing." According to Griffith's reports, the business world already knew what his conference was doing. Griffith reported to the Big Ten's athletic directors in 1938 that they had the support of the nation's business community, telling the athletic directors that Americans were regaining confidence after the failure of Roosevelt's court packing plan and the Reorganization Bill and that several eastern associates had expressed their "highest regard" for the Big Ten "because they felt we were conservative and sane and were keeping athletics on a sound foundation." To Griffith, the debate was not just a discussion over the pay of baseball umpires or the number of players allowed to travel with their squads; the battle over athletic policy was a fight over the future of the American democracy and economy as he and his colleagues understood them.

Griffith was not speaking only for himself when making these explicit connections between competitive athletics and a specific set of American values, beliefs, and institutions. Instead, as seen in the proceedings and publications of the national physical education associations, these views were common throughout the profession. In 1933, a Gettysburg College professor argued "in these days of stress, strain, and uncertainty the college student should be sent out into the world with a strong competitive spirit" and that "today, competition is keen and our students should have the benefit of that disciplinary training which they can only receive by engaging in some type of athletic activity." This disciplinary training was enhanced by the ability of physical
education programs and athletic activities to “preserve values and enrich life” while restoring morale.  

Many authors and speakers made explicit their contention that athletics offered the best vehicle the universities had for real “democratic training.” In 1931, Michigan’s athletic director, Fielding Yost, quoted a Harvard educator as arguing that athletics provided the best emotional training for democratic participation. Another physical educator argued in 1931, “social relationships are learned on the playfields. The contribution from our program to a useful citizenship surpasses that of any other.” He continued, “our democracy is dependent upon a high type of team work;” by teaching proper values college programs removed “impediments to a smooth running community, state, and national life.”

Unsurprisingly, an article entitled, “The Relation of Physical Education to the Purposes of Democracy” advanced the same general thesis: proper athletic training can create citizens better able and more inclined to protect the American democratic system. The author argued that “no other phase of the whole school curriculum offers as many, as potent, or as real opportunities for inculcating the principles of tolerance and the democratic attitude and habits of conduct as does physical education.”

This article’s author, like many other male physical educators echoed an argument common among the women physical educators: democratic training worked best when all got the opportunity to participate. Although the men were not willing to sacrifice their varsity programs as the women were, most still recognized that their rhetoric implied the need to expand their programs as widely as possible, especially as the threat of war approached. While almost all physical educators argued that their profession had an
unique ability to prepare the nation's youth for the mental and physical challenges of a potential war, few phrased their thoughts as colorfully as William Hughes from Teachers College, Columbia University. Hughes wrote in 1940 that "men die of hardening of the arteries, nations die of softening of the spine." His solution was simple, reemphasize in the nation's colleges the physical rigor and the democratic training of athletics. As he put it, "those who believe in athletics feel that the concrete that has gone into stadia will be more effective than that in the Maginot Line."101

Throughout the decade, athletic officials continued expressing their concern with the potential subversive influence of those on the political left on American campuses, just as the university presidents did. In November 1934 Griffith asked St. John to tell him if there were "any liberal clubs such as the League for Industrial Democracy at Ohio State." He also desired a confidential report about the numbers involved and the "pedigree" of the leaders. St. John quickly replied with the ominous news that there were three such groups active on the Columbus campus. The groups shared a core of 20 to 30 "very loud and articulate" members. St. John also warned Griffith that, "in this nucleus... there is a great majority of Cleveland Jews" and that two of the groups were "quite frankly communistic." In a student body of over 10,000 students, the presence of fewer than thirty students challenging the economic and political systems of the United States still threatened these athletic leaders.102

Nor did the fear of socialism in athletic policy of American governments dissipate as conditions began to improve.103 Judging from St. John's correspondence, many of his Big Ten contemporaries shared his and Griffith's ideological and political reasons for valuing men's intercollegiate athletics. For example, Glenn Frank, the President of the
University of Wisconsin, in late 1936 equated the desires for universal and high standards in intercollegiate athletics to the progressive struggles "enlightened doctors, lawyers, and business men" fought for their own standards. Frank later listed these standards in the form of a creed that labeled losing one's temper as "treason to the team," and he portrayed football as "as effective an instrument of moral and intellectual discipline as any enterprise the American university fosters." That is either a ringing endorsement of athletics or a condemnation of all other university activities, and it seems clear that Frank intended the former. Frank pointed out the need for competition and sportsmanship in the ranks of American business, finance and politics, and he argued that university athletics could be, as the Greek games once were, "a force for democracy, for self-control, for honesty, for patience, and for temperate living." 

If one believed everything Frank claimed, he could no longer question the place of athletics on a campus, but he might wonder about the importance of academic education to an institution boasting a properly run athletic program. Still, underneath Frank's hyperbole rests an assumption that many of his colleagues shared: intercollegiate athletics were necessary not only to insure the proper development of mature students but also to safeguard the future of American democracy and society. While discussing a conference move to restrict OSU's football practice length, University of Minnesota athletic director demonstrated the comfort level Midwestern athletic directors felt about expressing their laissez-faire political sentiments. Minnesota Athletic Director Frank McCormick wrote, "I don't think it is possible for them to put over such a regulation. If they start making everything fair and on an equal basis, the first thing you will know we will be as socialistic as our present form of government at Washington." It appears that
the "domino theory" appeared in American minds long before Eisenhower endorsed it. Once a committee started restricting the length of football practices, Columbus might as well have been a suburb of Moscow, or, for that matter, Hyde Park.

The threat of world war did not dissipate this fear; in fact it intensified the apprehension. In May 1941, Griffith still worried about the threat of an internal radical revolt more than anything else. He argued that the United States should not challenge Hitler on his own turf, 3,000 miles from home, or in the neutral territory of South America. Concerned by rumors that any Nazi attack on the United States “would be an inside job,” Griffith worried about what would happen even if the United States defeated the Nazis in a war. He was afraid that “these people who want collectivism, supervision, and regimentation may gain their wish if we spend one hundred billion dollars or more on a European war, repudiate our debts following the war and perhaps experience some sort of a revolution.” “What profit,” he inquired, “would it be to us to have licked Hitler” if “the collectivists who wanted regimentation should take over our country.” A collectivist regime would be unacceptable to Griffith, because by his definition, any organization that opposed competition—or college football—was un-American.106

The men making all of these arguments were some of the most prominent athletic officials in collegiate sport. They were conference commissioners, presidents of professional organizations, prominent athletic directors, respected professors of education, and the shapers of policies on their own campuses. Through their wide range of responses to the twin pressures of reform agitation and economic difficulties these men protected the institution of intercollegiate athletics during the Depression. Their
responses, buttressed by institutional inertia and continuing football profits, included public discussions of the Carnegie Report, the move to create and empower conference commissioners to deal with the identified problems in intercollegiate athletics, and the modification of an existing ideology supporting athletics to address the perceived social and political radicalism of the Depression. Their actions guaranteed that men’s intercollegiate athletics would emerge from the potential pitfalls of the 1930s essentially unchanged and unscathed. If the economic and reform pressures indeed offered, as California’s Kleeberger hoped, a “strategic moment to rebuild athletics,” then that moment passed without fundamental changes in the American way of athletics.

1 Watterson. *College Football*, 78-79.

2 Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University: A History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1962), 463. For more on how the universities tried to serve their host population as a way of creating a sense of community, see chapter six.

3 Chapters four and five address the use of sports, and the curtailment of competition, to teach traditional gender roles for women.

4 Pollard. *History of Ohio State*, 299, 300. The quote is on 299. Robert G. Sproul in “Statements by Presidents of Universities and Colleges on the Educational Value of Military Training” (Washington, D.C., 1935), 4, in (“Military Department, July 1, 1935-Dec. 31, 1936, no. 1”, Ser. 8, Box 32), Records of the President’s Office, ACC-94-85, SC, UML; Stadtman, *The University of California*, 302-303. Helen L. Horowitz argued that, during the Depression, although some students became radicalized and many outsiders believed most students had become more radical politically, “in numbers the political rebels were few. They led with little following among their own kind.” See, Horowitz, *Campus Life: Undergraduate Cultures From the End of the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987), 161. See pages 162-168 for profiles of selected “radicals” and for explanations of the connections between individuals’ campus activism and larger political movements.

5 Report of the President of the University of California, 1932-34, 20, BL, UCB. On page 21 of this report, Sproul told the governor and other readers of the report that “the best permanent answer to radicalism in
America is a more equitable distribution of work and wealth: the best temporary answers are the barbs of ridicule and the thunders of silence.”

6 Stadtman, The University of California, 303.

7 Callcott, History of the University of Maryland, 307.


9 James Riley Montgomery, Threshold of a New Day, 289.


11 George W. Rightmire to A. H. C. Byrd, 29 March 1933. (“Negro Education, 1933-35,” Series 1, Box 8), Papers of Harry C. Byrd, SC, UML.

12 For examples of these and other articles, see (“Anti-War and Anti-Communism. Newspaper Clippings on College Life, Communism and Pacifist Movement, 1926-1932.” Series 7, Box 2), Records of the President’s Office, SC, UML: “Alleged Radical Drift of Y.M.C.A. To Come to Fore,” Baltimore Sun, 13 September 1926, in “Anti-War and Anti-Communism. Newspaper Clippings on College Life, Communism and Pacifist Movement, 1926-1932;” H. C. Byrd to J. S. Eichelberger, 14 October 1932, (“Correspondence, Oct.-Dec., 1932.” Series 1, Box 3), Papers of H. C. Byrd, SC, UML: Francis R. Welsh to H. C. Byrd, 22 March 1935, (“Anti-War and Anti-Communist [Misc. Correspondence: Anti-War. Communism. Lees and Coale vs. Pearson, 1932-34],” Series 7, Box 1), Records of the President’s Office, SC, UML. In 1928, a local newspaper reported that “The University of Maryland apparently has put its finger on all the organized groups of native-born Americans and foreigners who for several years have been conducting these partly camouflaged Communist drives in schools and universities throughout the country. The roster of these propagandists is said to be more complete at College Park than at any other seat of learning and their appearances on University of Maryland platforms are now things of the past.” See “Maryland U. Aims to Crush Reds,” 1928. (“Scrapbook (Byrd Book),” Series 4, Box 4), Papers of H.C. Byrd, SC, UML.

13 Stadtman, The University of California, 294.

14 Stadtman, The University of California, 294-296.

15 Stadtman, The University of California, 297.

16 Stadtman, The University of California, 297-300. This defiance of public opinion would continue into the war years. In April of 1942, the California Monthly published an article by UC political science assistant professor Eric C. Bellquist entitled “Tolerance Needed.” In this extended essay, Bellquist cautioned his readers that “certainly few things are ever quite so dangerous to civil liberties as a patterned patriotism on the loose, no matter how high and pure the aims and motives of those who shape it.” See page 8.

17 Minutes of Executive Session, 15 November 1939, (“1:8,” CU-282), Associated Students Records, BL, UCB.

18 Minutes of Executive Session, 27 March 1940, (“1.8,” CU-282), Associated Students Records, BL, UCB.
The Spark, June 1932, ("National Student League (Spark), 1932," V.F. 18/C.B.), U.T. President's Office Records, CAH, UTA.

R. L. Batts to the Regents, 14 June 1932, "National Student League (Spark), 1932, V.F. 18/C.B., U.T. President's Office Records, CAH, UTA.


Callcott, History of the University of Maryland, 306; H. C. Byrd to R. H. Wettach, 21 March 1933, ("Negro Education, 1933-35," Series 1, Box 8), Papers of Harry C. Byrd, SC, UML.

W. M. Hillegeist to P. A. Pearson, 16 June 1935, ("Negro Education, 1933-35." Series 1, Box 8), Papers of Harry C. Byrd, SC, UML. Marshall was assisted in this trial by his legal mentor, Charles Houston. During the trial, Marshall argued that the case dealt with broader issues than simple admission to a university's professional school; instead, on trial was the "moral commitment in our country's creed." See John Egerton, Speak Now Against the Day: The Generation Before the Civil Rights Movement in the South (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 152.

H. C. Byrd to Roger Howell, 16 July 1935, ("Negro Students. July 1, 1935-June 1, 1937 (1 of 2)," Series 8, Box 39), Records of the President's Office, SC, UML.

Callcott, History of the University of Maryland, 306, Thurgood Marshall to H. C. Byrd, 19 March 1937, ("Negro Students (2 of 2)," Series 8, Box 37), Records of the President's Office, SC, UML.

Callcott, History of the University of Maryland, 307.

Callcott, History of the University of Maryland, 307.

Pollard, History of Ohio State, 303-304. The minutes of OSU's Board of Trustees' meetings do not discuss Miller's firing.


In October, 1929, University of Texas's athletic director and mathematics professor, Dr. H. J. Ettlinger reviewed Taft's article in the student newspaper, The Daily Texan, and found fault with the former president's argument. Ettlinger contended that the mere existence of popular football teams, and expensive coaches and stadia, did not prevent schools from attaining academic excellence. Ettlinger also argued that
Taft overestimated the importance undergraduates placed on football, writing, "the average student on the campus pays no more attention to a championship football game than the average prosperous business man on the street pays to the World Series." See "Ettlinger Reviews Taft Article on Business Football," *The Daily Texan* (Oct. 1929), ("Athletic Council, 1929-1930," VF 5E.B), University of Texas President's Office Records, 1907-1968, CAH, UTA.

For information about the Atherton report, see *The California Monthly* 44 (April, 1940): 28. For more information about other critical reports on the conduct of college football during the 1930s, see Watterson, *College Football*, 177-190.


Savage, *American College Athletics*, 166.

Savage, *American College Athletics*, 175.


J.L. Morrill to L. W. St. John, 11 December 1931, 1. ("Intercollegiate Conference: Board of Regents: Questionnaire: 1931." 9/e-1/9), Director of Athletics, TOSUA.

For an example of this criticism of female physical educators, see Ronald Smith, "Women’s Control of American College Sport: The Good of Those Played or an Exploitation by Those Who Controlled?" *Sport History Review*, 29 (1998), 103-120.


Robert G. Sproul to A. B. Reading, Jr., 19 November 1930. ("1930:371." CU-5, Ser.2), Office of the President Papers, BL, UCB.


Dating the emergence of a P.C.C. commissioner is difficult. Thelin indicated on pages 54-55 of Games Colleges Play that the P.C.C. had a full-time commissioner by 1933, and the minutes of the 31 December 1931 P.C.C. meeting record the presence of J. A. Butler, Commissioner of the P.C.C. However, Putnam’s report to Sproul of the meeting immediately after the above quoted letter indicated that only California, UCLA, and Oregon State, out of ten universities, supported a commissioner, and a 1939 report by commissioner Edwin N. Atherton indicated that he had begun his two year survey of conference conditions before becoming commissioner. He wrote that, after submitting his report to the conference’s faculty representatives, he “was named Commissioner for a three-year term, with [his] general duties being to ascertain, assemble, and report the facts regarding compliance or non-compliance of member colleges and individuals with the rules.” See Edwin N. Atherton, “The Conference Rules,” California Monthly (November 1939), 12.


Savage, American College Athletics, 291.

Savage, American College Athletics, 310, 311.


Dyreson, “Regulating the Body and the Body Politic.” 131-137.


Frederick Rudolph wrote that during the Depression, "the educational outlook of John Dewey made headway in the colleges for the first time. Dewey's insistence that education and experience were one and the same thing, his concern over the disjunction between education and society, found new acceptance in a period when the failings of organized society pressed in upon individual experience." See Rudolph, The American College and University: A History, (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), 468. Callcott, History of the University of Maryland, 330-331. A 1932 student paper from Ohio State argued that "this concept of physical education lends itself to the progressive method of education. In this light physical education can become one of the most effective instruments for the relating and integrating of the various fields of academic instruction and of life . . . physical education becomes a way of living. The virtues of courage, endurance and strength, honesty, competence, imagination, joyousness, and pride are engendered—through it all a spirit of splendid living maintains." See Oscar L. Thomas, "The Educational Objectives in Athletics," ("Physical Education: 'Educational Objectives in Athletics': by Oscar L. Thomas: 1932," RG 9/e-1/17), Director of Athletics, TOSUA.

Minutes of Southern Conference, 14 January 1932, ("Southern Conference Minutes, 1932-33," Series 2, Box 14), Papers of Geary Eppley, SC, UML.

Clyde Littlefield, "The Functions of College Athletics and Some Things That are a Menace." The Alcade, 296, 297.

Frank Kleeberger to Robert G. Sproul, 29 November 1930, ("130:371, CU-5, Ser. 2), Office of the President Papers, BL, UCB; Robert G. Sproul to Clare M. Torrey, 4 December 1930, ("1930:371," CU-5, Ser. 2), BL, UCB.

Frank Kleeberger to Robert G. Sproul, 29 November 1930, ("130:371," CU-5, Ser. 2), Office of the President Papers, BL, UCB.


Frank Kleeberger to Robert G. Sproul, 29 November 1930, ("130:371," CU-5, Ser. 2), Office of the President Papers, BL, UCB.

Clyde Littlefield, "The Functions of College Athletics and Some Things That are a Menace," The Alcade, 296, 297.

Dyreson, "Regulating the Body and the Body Politic," 123.

Dyreson, "Regulating the Body and the Body Politic," 131-137.


Historians have long understood the importance of this type of ideology to advocates of institutionalized sports. Ronald Smith's Sports and Freedom: The Rise of Big-Time College Athletics (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988) offers perhaps the best explanation of how many Americans defended their sporting ventures by claiming physical, social, and spiritual benefits. Smith highlights the attention devoted to the amateur ideal, based on a British university model. That emphasis on amateurism still echoed during the Depression period examined here. More recently, Steven Pope's Patriotic Games: Sporting Traditions in the American Imagination, 1876-1926 illustrates the conscious efforts many Americans made to link their sporting activities with their country's heritage, traditions, and values.

For one of the earliest examples of this argument, see Barton J. Bernstein's essay, "The New Deal: The Conservative Achievements of Liberal Reform," in Barton J. Bernstein, ed., Towards a New Past: Dissenting Essays in American History (New York: Pantheon Books, 1968). Bernstein wrote of the New Deal, "designed to maintain the American system, liberal activity was directed toward essentially conservative goals" and that Roosevelt, "protected the established system: he sapped organizational radicalism of its waning strength and of its potential constituency among the unorganized and discontented." Towards a New Past, 264 and 265. As part of Roosevelt's New Deal, the Works Progress Administration (later named the Works Projects Administration) spent over 1.1 billion dollars on recreation-related projects from 1935 through 1941. Many of these programs were designed to keep the underutilized labor force physically fit, but they were also intended to inculcate the values of hard work, punctuality, discipline, and order into the participants, continuing the work commenced by the industrial recreation leagues of the 1920s. See Wong, "FDR and the New Deal on Sport and Recreation." 181-185.

John Griffith recognized exactly what Dyerson argued, that during the 1920s and 1930s many Americans had abandoned their belief in the formative powers of athletics. Still, Griffith and his colleagues in the nation's universities did not follow this general trend and, in fact, worked against it. In 1941, Griffith wrote to the "Nation's Athletic Leaders," that "there is abundant evidence that our people generally like athletics but they think of sports in terms of entertainment and amusement and not as an essential part of education or of military training either. Can we not take the lead in trying to show them the real value of athletics?" See John Griffith to the Nation's Athletic Leaders, 15 September 1941. ("Intercollegiate Conference: Commissioner Correspondence (Griffith) 1941-1942 (Folder 2 of 2).") 9/e-1/10). Director of Athletics. TOSUA.


Professionalism had a very negative connotation when used regarding college athletics, implying corruption of the supposedly pure amateur motivations and sentiments. However, as historian Ronald Smith argues, American society never had adopted pure. British-style amateur college athletics that emphasized class distinctions and inequality. Practically from the moment of their inception. Smith argues. American intercollegiate sports were professional. Smith writes. "There was too much competition, too strong a belief in merit over heredity, too abundant an ideology of freedom of opportunity for the amateur ideal to succeed . . . . American colleges practiced a type of professionalism, and yet they claimed amateurism." Sports and Freedom, 174.


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"Athletics," 9, 6, and 9. To read some contemporary and representative explanations of the role competitive athletics could play in building character, see, among others, Herbert E. Hawkes, "What Should The Physical Education and Athletic Departments Contribute to the Education of College Youth?" College Physical Education Association Proceedings (1934); Charles D. Giaugue, "New Objectives to Meet Modern Trends," Journal of Health and Physical Education 8 (February 1937); Frank S. Lloyd, "Liberal Cultural Values of Physical Education," Journal of Health and Physical Education 9 (February 1938); and William L. Hughes, "The Role of Intercollegiate Athletics in National Preparedness," College Physical Education Proceedings (1940). The University of Texas’s D. A. Penick, who also served as the president of the Southwest Conference, wrote about the values athletics could teach college students, "There is an incentive to right living, there is the development of the spirit of cooperation and team-work, body-building, character-building, development of courage, resourcefulness, initiative, fairness, courtesy, sportsmanship, determination, leadership, will power, quick thinking, perseverance, playing openly and honestly and generously, taking victories modestly and defeats quietly, cheerful obedience to rules and rulings of officials . . . " D.A. Penick, "The Ideals of Intercollegiate Athletics—Are They Attainable?" College Physical Education Association Proceedings (1932): 34.

If nothing else, Morrill's statements feature the buzzwords that captivate students of America’s then maturing consumer culture. Morrill lauded the ability of group sports to provide outlets for individuals’ personalities while also instilling character. Warren Susman has argued that United States underwent a gradual shift in emphasis from inner-directed "character" stressing morality to outer-directed "personality" emphasizing popularity and admiration. Morrill's assertion that athletics can instill character is significant because Susman's review of over two hundred sources reveals that around the turn of the century, the time of Morrill’s education, certain words were most often associated with "character." According to Susman, these words included "citizenship, duty, democracy, work, building, golden deeds, outdoor life, conquest, honor, reputation, morals, manners, integrity, and above all, manhood." (emphasis his). Throughout the 1930s, most of these words also found themselves offered as products of intercollegiate athletics. Warren Susman, Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), xii, 273-274.

[J.L. Morrill to L. W. St. John, 11 December 1931, ("Intercollegiate Conference: Board of Regents: Questionnaire: 1931"), 1.]

[See Frank Kleeberger to Robert G. Sproul, 29 November 1930, (130:371. CU-5. Ser. 2). Office of the President Papers, BL, UCB.]

[J.L. Morrill to L. W. St. John, 11 December 1931, 2-4, ("Intercollegiate Conference: Board of Regents: Questionnaire: 1931").]


["Some Observations Submitted by John L. Griffith on the Paper Presented by Mr. Ross and on the Proposed Questionnaire to be Sent to Members of Governing Boards of Universities." ("Intercollegiate Conference: Board of Regents: Questionnaire: 1931"), 4.5. There was still another response to this controversy instigated by Ross and the Carnegie Report: a University of Minnesota survey claiming to "reflect the attitudes of 10,000 individuals toward athletics in a typical mid-western state university." The authors of the study, funded not coincidentally from football revenues, recommended only a few minor changes in athletic operations and largely endorsed the existing system. After selectively citing different groups' responses to different questions, the study ended by claiming that most university presidents "apparently believe in the social philosophy of education," meaning that the social values instilled into men during competition made the activities worthwhile. Not wanting anyone to misinterpret its advocacy of the social philosophy of education with the support of any socialist cause, the report concludes that the "Intercollegiate Conference exemplifies the true spirit of democratic and representative government."]
For example, Griffith reported in October 1936 that most eastern schools' student bodies were supporting the Republican candidate for president, while the Ohio State students supported Roosevelt. Griffith could not understand why "the middle west still believes in the magic of government and thinks that Hoover ran 59 national trains in addition to ours into the ditch and that Roosevelt has pulled them all out." In his reply, St. John thanked Griffith for keeping him updated on the latest speeches and expressed his sorrow that he was "not in a position to do a more active piece of work in support of the things that you and I both believe." A few weeks later, Griffith discussed the presidential election with St. John: "Well, Saint, we took an awful licking yesterday, didn't we? I was reconciled to a Roosevelt victory but I never dreamed it would be a landslide. Apparently America wittingly or unwittingly sold her vote. Well, if things don't work out well the next four years they can't blame you and me because we did what we could to bring about a change." See John Griffith to Lynn St. John, 20 October 1936; St. John to Griffith, 22 October 1936; and Griffith to St. John, 4 November 1936, ("Intercollegiate Conference: Commissioner Correspondence (Griffith) and St. John, May 1936-March 1937," 9/e-1/10), Director of Athletics, TOSUA.

For other examples of the shared beliefs of Griffith and St. John see especially Griffith to St. John, 2 May 1941, and St. John to Griffith, 10 May 1941, ("Intercollegiate Conference: Commissioner Correspondence (Griffith) 1940-1941 (folder 1 of 2)," 9/e-1/10), Director of Athletics, TOSUA.

Memorandum to The Directors of Athletics of the Intercollegiate Conference, February 3, 1932, ("Intercollegiate Conference: Athletic Director's Correspondence: 1930-1938," 9/e-1/9), Director of Athletics, TOSUA.


John Griffith to Frank E. Richart, 5 July 1939, ("Intercollegiate Conference: Commissioner Correspondence (Griffith) 1939-1940 (folder 2 of 2)," 9/e-1/10), Director of Athletics, TOSUA; John L. Griffith to Colonel G. L. Townsend, 8 March 1938, ("Intercollegiate Conference: Commissioner Correspondence (Griffith), 1937-38," 9/e-1/9), Director of Athletics, TOSUA. Townsend had been on active duty at Ohio State for 12 years as a professor of military science and tactics. After leading the "largest R.O.T.C. unit in the country," Townsend became professor emeritus of military science and tactics upon his retirement. See Board of Trustees Minutes, 25 February 1938.


Hughes, "The Role of Intercollegiate Athletics in National Preparedness," 21; see also Harry A. Scott, "The Ramparts We Watch," *College Physical Education Association Proceedings* (1940).

John Griffith to Lynn St. John, 27 November 1934. ("Intercollegiate Conference: Commissioner Correspondence (Griffith and St. John), 1934," 9/e-1/10, Director of Athletics, TOSUA; St. John to Griffith, 6 December 1934. The three groups that St. John identified were a National Student League, a League Against War and Fascism, and a "Social Problems Club. According to St. John, the National Student League and the League Against War and Fascism were the "communistic" ones. In another letter, Griffith asserted that the American Constitution was "based on the principle of private property ownership, inheritance rights, etc." He concluded this argument with the position that "those who believe in Communism are free to live in Russia and those who believe in the other isms can go where those isms are practiced." See John Griffith to George W. Robnett, 16 February 1939. ("Intercollegiate Conference: Commissioner Correspondence (Griffith) 1938-March 1939." RG 9/e-1). Director of Athletics, TOSUA.

The athletic directors of the Big Ten were more concerned with "socialism" when the effected revenues were large ones. Being human, they were not always consistent in their advocacy of absolute competition; after all, their universities already worked within conference confines. In the spring of 1935, Ohio State and seven other universities supported a motion to allow a conference-wide broadcasting contract. The June 7, 1935 minutes of the Ohio State Athletic Board include the report that "the Directors and Faculty Representatives went on record as favoring a cooperative broadcasting program for the Conference, although two of the college presidents were opposed to the idea." "Athletic Board Minutes. 1934-1940." June 7, 1935.


L. W. St. John to T. Nelson Metcalf, March 26, 1934; Frank G. McCormick to L. W. St. John, April 3, 1934, ("Intercollegiate Conference: Athletic Director's Correspondence: 1930-1938." 9/e-1.9), Director of Athletics, TOSUA.

John Griffith to Mark Sullivan, 6 May 1941, ("Intercollegiate Conference: Commissioner Correspondence (Griffith) 1940-1941 (Folder 1 of 2)." 9/e-1/10), Director of Athletics, TOSUA.
CHAPTER 4

AN ORTHODOX COMMUNITY: THE IDEOLOGY OF WOMEN’S ATHLETICS
AND THE STRUCTURE OF WOMEN’S COLLEGE SPORTS DURING THE
1930s

“It is time for all women of the country, grandmothers, mothers, sisters and daughters to demand a sane program in sports—a program conducted in trained women who are interested in girls and not in gate receipts and self or firm advertisement. There are great values in sports for women, but why should these values be limited to the few trained stars?” Helen N. Smith, “Evils of Sports for Women,” 1930.

“Come join a sport and find real pleasure:
Joy Without Measure the whole year through
Where skies are lighter, and smiles are brighter
Play the Game, not for fame, but for friendship true,
At California, hail Alma Mater, though all
The year we’ll ere be gay.
With voices raising, thy honor praising.
We’ll be true, loyal to W.A.A."

Grace Johnstone ’27. To be sung at a 1929 W.A.A. meeting to the tune of “Neapolitan Nights”

“Games like basketball and baseball are combative sports. They develop ugly muscles—muscles ugly in girls—as well as scowling faces and the competitive spirit. As an inevitable consequence your girls may find it more difficult to attract the most worthy fathers for their children.” Quoted in Gittings, “Why Cramp Competition?” 1931.

In contrast to what happened to men’s college athletics, the onset of the Great Depression did not directly threaten the existing financing and operation of women’s
athletics on American campuses. The financial and social strain did, however, affect the ways female physical educators thought about their duties, their programs, and their jobs. First, female physical educators working during the early twentieth century always feared the loss of their jobs to men, and this anxiety only increased the specter of emergency budgetary cutbacks eliminating their positions looming all around them. They found that the most effective ways to guard against losing their positions within the academy were to emphasize that only women could provide the expertise, supervision, and guidance that the young college women needed, to reaffirm an existing ideology that stressed the fundamental differences between men’s and women’s bodies and social needs, and to structure their programs in a manner so dissimilar to the men’s that no one would dispute the desirability of female experts molding the nation’s “proper” young ladies.

Secondly, just as male athletic leaders, in response to the social turmoil of the 1930s, reemphasized the important contributions men’s athletics could make to the preservation of democracy, during the 1930s female college physical educators did precisely the same thing. However, the version of democracy taught to college women through athletics was not the competition-based, individualistic, victory-oriented democracy that the men learned: instead, the women’s vision of democracy and society was much more egalitarian and collective, based on the principles of absolute equality of opportunity and the denial of individual acclaim and attention. The different structures of the men’s and women’s athletic programs both revealed and perpetuated the different sets of values male and female university officials intended each gender to receive from their athletic programs. The men’s highly publicized and celebrated varsity programs,
particularly football, acted as the core of men’s athletics; in contrast, the women’s intramural programs served as the backbone of women’s college athletics throughout the 1930s and worked to protect college women from the excesses seen in men’s intercollegiate athletics and in women’s industrial league athletics.

Depression circumstances did not create these gender-based interpretations of how college athletics programs could teach desired values, but they did help solidify the beliefs in most cases. These different visions of the proper nature of men’s and women’s sports, coupled with the universities’ unwillingness to finance women’s athletics on anywhere near the same scale as men’s sports, made it much more likely that few serious attempts to expand women’s athletics would emerge. Yet, such a movement did develop across the nation by the late 1930s: in part because some educators recognized that their female college students were not satisfied with only the types of athletic opportunities endorsed by the professional orthodoxy. Simply put, the physical educators had a difficult time reconciling their rhetoric with the realities they faced on their individual campuses. Promoted by a younger generation of physical educators who were both less restricted by the orthodox views of women’s roles and the nature of women’s athletics and also encouraged by the significant advances many women had made in public life, the urge to expand collegiate women’s athletic opportunities was as much a product of the 1930s as was the resolute resistance to the new ideas. Though moderate in many ways, the move to create a women’s N.C.A.A. and to launch a national intercollegiate golf tournament for women overtly challenged the beliefs of most American female and male professional physical educators. While the leaders of this movement accepted the notion that women’s organizations should
oversee women's sports, they posited that, contrary to the beliefs of most physical education professionals, a proper form of femininity and controlled competition could coexist.

The challenged orthodoxy had been in place less than twenty years. Beginning in the 1920s and extending through the 1930s, the mantra "A Girl for Every Game, and a Game for Every Girl" guided the athletic policies and shaped the athletic programs for women attending American colleges and universities. As part of a national and international movement, female physical educators worked to protect their female charges from the "evils of sports for women" and to prevent women's college athletic programs from becoming as corrupt, competitive, and commercialized as they believed the men's programs to be. The physical educators also defined themselves in contrast to the emerging working-class model of sport. During difficult financial times, the educators labored to preserve their own positions within the academy, and, by establishing approved structures of athletic organization and operation, they sought to teach their athletes a certain set of gender-specific, often racially-determined, middle-class values and habits.

Almost from the beginning, women attending American colleges desired access to athletic opportunities. As Susan Cahn pointed out, during the late 1800s and early 1900s, "student social life at some schools thrived around active women's sports programs." This was especially true at several women's colleges in the late 19th century, where "trained physical educators and resident physicians were urging [female college students] to lay aside their corsets (and their inhibitions) and exercise as they
never had before.” Between 1870 and 1900, students at Vassar, Smith, and Mount Holyoke often picked up bats and baseball mitts when they laid their corsets aside, consciously choosing to play “America’s game,” one associated directly with masculinity and manliness.3

Although most Americans had come to associate baseball with masculinity by the late 1800s, basketball did not have that immediate connection. By 1895, even though James A. Naismith had invented basketball only a few years earlier, women in all sections of the United States were playing basketball, with women’s colleges in the South and East hosting some of the most enthusiastic contests, and Western colleges also supporting intercollegiate competition vigorously. At Smith and Radcliffe, the annual tournaments pitting the basketball teams of each class against each other became campus institutions, attracting the interest of the entire campus community. These games were not just popular or frivolous exercises. Instead, officials at schools where women played basketball saw the sport primarily as a teaching tool—an exercise that could build more fit bodies, more cooperative players, and quicker thinking young ladies. Educators also developed rules for less strenuous, distinctively women’s versions of basketball in order to combat the possible perceived negative results of basketball.3

The first “interinstitutional” women’s basketball game occurred in 1892 when the University of California squad played Miss Head’s School, and the intercollegiate schedule began to fill up shortly thereafter. Massachusetts’ Mount Holyoke College and Louisiana’s Sophie Newcomb College, for example, both began playing in 1893. In many places, including Ohio State, by the early 1900s women’s intercollegiate
basketball games were attracting crowds of 500 to 1,000 fans, numbers even more impressive when one considers that O.S.U. never had more than 500 women students during this period.4

Women’s sports continued to develop up to and through the 1920s, not only at the college level. Although historians usually highlight the accomplishments of and the attention given to such men as Babe Ruth and Red Grange when referring to the 1920s as the “age of sports heroes,” women also became sports heroes during this era.5 The 1920s saw the emergence of the athletic “new woman” and of a new challenge to male physical superiority. During the 1920s women demonstrated their athletic prowess as such athletes as Sybil Bauer broke the world’s men’s backstroke records and Gertrude Ederle swam the English Channel more than two hours faster than any of her five male predecessors. Moreover, tennis stars such as France’s Suzanne Lenglen and America’s Helen Wills brought increased public attention to women’s athletics during the 1920s as their eras of dominance overlapped.6

Significantly, however, the attention these and other female athletes attracted and the discussions they sparked were not focused solely on the women’s athletic feats. Although relatively few female athletes had to deal with the demands of athletic expectations, fame, and constant media attention that male stars confronted, all female athletes had to navigate their way though a confusing maze of larger societal expectations. The expanding athletic opportunities between 1900 and 1930 had different meanings for white American women of different social and economic classes, and some of the most striking departures from the models of “middle-class behavior” were seen in the athletic activities of the American working class and among female athletes.

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competing outside the control of school or college supervisors, often in strenuous basketball and in track and field events. The developing working class model of sport, one controlled by white, middle-class men and existing outside the academy, presented and embodied formidable challenges to Victorian ideals of propriety and the notion of separate spheres. Directly contradicting middle-class expectations, the working-class model emphasized competition among permanent teams in front of mixed-sex crowds, using women's teams to advertise sponsoring companies, and utilizing athletes' sexuality to make the advertisements effective. 

While concerned female physical educators designed school sports programs to give working-class women the mental and physical tools necessary to improve their stations in life, the same middle-class professional leaders intended for physical education activities in schools and, especially, colleges to create more refined, poised, and respectable middle class "ladies." By the 1920s, however, it was clear to interested observers that professional physical educators could not and would not control all women's sports, particularly those of the working class.

This lack of control was the product of an explosion in the number of women's competitive sporting opportunities outside colleges and schools. Throughout the early twentieth century industrial recreation programs in the United States and Canada offered leagues, clubs, and tournaments for employees of all skill levels. In 1923, for example, more than 500 of Chicago's Western Electric Company female employees participated in the company's bowling program, while more than 120 rode horses and almost 100 competed in rifle shooting competitions. These company and industrial based leagues catered to a new demographic section, a population of young, single, urban, working
women who wanted to keep playing basketball and other games even after leaving the schools where they learned them.\(^9\)

While part of a broader industrial strategy known as welfare capitalism, which was designed in part to replace workers' ethnic loyalties with loyalty to their employers, these industrial leagues also provided fantastic corporate advertisements. They did this by selling the sex appeal of the female athletes while at the same time fostering wider recognition of the companies' names. The time-honored practice of using male athletes to advertise institutions and organizations was becoming more commonplace for working-class women in the 1920s. In Texas, exceptionally talented and successful teams attracted regular paying crowds of 1,000-2,000, and the teams often competed before audiences numbering over 5,000 in tournament finals. By 1930, almost 50 women's basketball teams received regular coverage in Dallas's newspapers, coverage that included pictures, box scores, accounts of games, and player interviews, and discussions of upcoming games. These games were so popular that, in 1931, leaders of the Southwest Conference recommended that the conference loosen its officiating so that the men's college game would more closely resemble the more popular women's industrial league games.\(^10\)

Women found even more opportunities to compete outside the industrial leagues, colleges and schools. Responding to women's demands, the all-male Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) added events for female athletes, beginning in 1916 with a national swimming competition and adding in 1924 a track competition and, in 1926, a basketball tournament. While never matching the public appeal of the men's tournaments, such women's competitions attracted enthusiastic crowds of hundreds and sometimes
thousands. This expansion of competitive opportunities fostered even greater press coverage of women athletes and contributed to the introduction of American women athletes on the international stage. Although women had exhibited their golf, tennis, and archery skills at the 1900 and 1904 Olympics, not until 1920 did the United States send female skaters and swimmers to represent their country in the Olympic games. Again, this escalation did not represent progress to many American physical educators, male or female; in fact, by the 1920s, American physical education organizations actively campaigned against women participating in international competitions and especially in the Olympics.

Educators were equally upset that American women athletes attracted notoriety and acclaim for their physical appearance as much as, if not more than, their physical skill. In both the industrial leagues and the male-controlled AAU contests, the display of athletic, but still feminine bodies drew extensive public notice. After perusing media accounts of female athletes and seeing countless descriptions of athletes as “alluring” and “nymphs.” Cahn concluded that the “athletes were clearly perceived and portrayed as attractive, erotic women.” This appeal was conscious and intentional, if not always by the women, then certainly by the male event promoters. Just as French tennis star Suzanne Lenglen “modernized” tennis in the 1920s by wearing shorter skirts and makeup during matches, the industrial leagues often used more revealing uniforms, made of shimmering, brightly colored fabrics, to accentuate the sexual appeal of the female athletes. One of the most successful and significant industrial teams of the 1920s and 1930s, the Texas-based Employers’ Casualty Company basketball squad replaced the traditional, “appropriate” uniforms with “panties of bright orange satin” and similar
jerseys. Not only did these new uniforms allow for greater freedom of movement for the athletes, they also generated enough controversy and interest to boost the team’s average crowd size from the low hundreds to around 5,000. In 1931 the Director of Women’s Physical Education at the University of Cincinnati, Helen Smith, scandalized her colleagues with her account of a local tournament hosted by a “well-known sporting goods house” that required one women’s team to play basketball in “a sort of peach colored bathing suit.”

As Cahn has explained, the striking advances made by women athletes in the 1920s raised serious questions for a male-dominated society. If assertive women could best men physically, then men might have to stop considering themselves as the guardians of the “weaker sex.” In short, if the “new” woman became the typical woman, then all members of society would have to reevaluate the entire spectrum of male-female relations. As Cahn argued, the growth of women’s sports symbolized the blurring of traditional gender-based power relations. Despite living in the decade of women voters and greater sexual freedom, most Americans and especially most university educators, male and female, regarded this upheaval as undesirable.

Media presentations and cultivated public personas of many prominent women athletes presented clear challenges to the existing middle-class model of gender stereotypes in the 1920s and 1930s. Forsaking the ideal of “moderation” that had governed the activities of most female athletes in the 1900s and 1910s, many athletes in the 1920s sought unmoderated excellence in athletic endeavors and unabashed freedom in personal matters, refusing to succumb to traditional, middle-class norms of respectability. Tennis star Lenglen embodied wider societal trends of the 1920s by
displaying more of her athletic body than any of her predecessors had and by overtly showcasing her sexuality. In contrast, her American counterpart, University of California alumnus Helen Wills, earned the nickname “The American Girl” by rejecting Lenglen’s flapper mode of dress and behavior and presenting a more controlled and moderate public image. What the middle- and upper-class fans of tennis considered “American” was far more conservative than what Lenglen or her kindred spirits in the American industrial leagues and AAU embodied.

The best known, most accomplished, and also one of the most controversial American female athletes of the twentieth century was Mildred “Babe” Didrikson of Beaumont, Texas, whose story illustrates well the conflicting messages attached to women’s athletics in the 1920s and 1930s. In this era, in contrast to the working-class women of the industrial leagues, “respectable” women were expected to become healthier from exercise without advertising their feminine sexuality by exercising in front of male crowds or in revealing outfits. At the same time they were supposed to guard against becoming too masculine by developing large muscles or competitive instincts. Didrikson had a difficult time reconciling her extraordinary talent and desires with society’s expectations.

Incredibly gifted in every sport she attempted, the working-class Didrikson was the sole representative of the Employers Casualty Company at the 1932 AAU women’s track and field championships where she broke four world records and won six gold medals all in one afternoon. In the 1932 Olympics, Didrikson built upon that success by winning two gold medals, forfeiting a third only because she had used an unauthorized technique in the high jump. But her unrivaled athletic ability did not win Didrikson
unadulterated public acclaim; instead, her skills, accomplishments, muscular physique, competitive drive, and "mannish" manner only highlighted tensions created by other athletic women who were also challenging gender expectations. Seeking to feminize this intimidating athlete, male reporters continuously juxtaposed her numerous athletic medals with the cooking (or sewing) prize she had won as a youngster. Moreover, it was not until "Babe" married an undeniably masculine man, a large former wrestler named George Zaharias, and took up the genteel game of golf as her primary sport did many sportswriters and observers view her as sufficiently respectable and feminine. By providing evidence through her publicized married life that she was a heterosexual woman who could cook and clean, while also playing and dominating more "feminine" games, Didrikson-Zaharias achieved a greater level of public acceptance in the late 1940s.20

To understand the development of the institutionalized anti-competitive, anti-elite mentality that dominated the women's physical education profession after the early 1920s, it must be first recognized that it was, in part, against this working-class, ethnic, "other" that the white, middle-class, professional female physical education leaders and organizations defined themselves. This expanding model of extra-collegiate athletic activity, combined with the omnipresent specter of commercialized, competitive, elite men's intercollegiate athletics, constituted the two dangerous poles that the female physical educators tried to steer between.

In the early 1920s, female leaders of women's college sports led a conservative reaction to this wide array of social and athletic changes. This legion of "respectable"
women believed that they should control the development and administration of women’s sports. Historian Ronald Smith summarized the complex system of justifications these women constructed in support of their claims for authority by separating the argument into five categories. Smith explained first that the women claimed to want to “prevent the exploitation of women in their sports activities.” as they felt the AAU and industrial leagues were doing. Second, they wanted to “develop womanly qualities and protect women’s reproductive functions.” to preserve proper femininity and to avoid overexertion that might damage athletes’ abilities to reproduce or attract men with whom they could conceive children. Third, the women planned to, “develop educational and character-building opportunities not fostered in men’s athletics,” in other words to infuse the athletes with desirable beliefs and character traits. Fourth, concerned physical educators argued that they wanted to be “democratic” and give equal athletic opportunities to all women, not just the most skilled, as opposed to the practices they observed in men’s college athletics. Finally, to this well-documented list of concerns, Smith added a fifth motivating desire, one he characterized as based on “exploitation” and “hypocrisy.” He asserted that the desire of professional female physical educators to separate the women’s athletic activities completely from men’s also stemmed from the selfish, if understandable, desire to preserve their professional autonomy and careers.

They did so by working through several interconnected organizations to protect their own status as the proper administrators of women’s college athletics. One can temper Smith’s provocative characterization of the physical educators as Machiavellian exploiters and still recognize that women, after struggling to achieve professional and professorial status, laboring in a university system that offered women few leadership
positions and a society that offered them even fewer, could rationally adopt plans
designed to preserve their authority and autonomy. As Barbara Harris explained in 1978,
"if the 1920s saw a slowing down of the entrance of women into the professions, the
1930s spelled disaster. Under the impact of the depression, hostility to female
employment reached new levels of intensity." This hostility was especially evident when
married women continued to work, and its targets included university professors. During
the 1930s, the numbers and percentages of female college teachers declined by almost
one-fifth, dropping from 32.5 percent of all university teachers to 26.5 percent, a
downward trend that would continue until the 1950s. The female physical educators had
every reason to be apprehensive, and they responded by creating organizations and
ideologies to preserve their positions and protect the young women under their
supervision.

In 1917 the Committee of Women’s Athletics (CWA) was formed as a part of the
existing American Physical Educators Association (APEA) in one of the first steps to
create the protective and controlled athletic system for women that the physical
education professional establishment increasingly came to promote and defend. CWA
members almost immediately focused their attention on the perceived dangers posed to
female athletes by the male-controlled AAU and by the male, elitist, exploitative model
of athletics they saw in the Olympics and men’s intercollegiate athletics. They argued
against female participation in the Olympics and AAU competitions and worked instead
to create a well-rounded athletic program that would adequately prepare all participants
for the vaguely defined “varied emergencies of life.”
An organization featuring many of the same people and promoting an almost identical agenda as the CWA emerged in 1923 as the Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation (NAAF). As historian Joan Huit explained, the CWA and the Women's Division "formed a united front that opposed the AAU, collegiate, and any other efforts to provide elite and varsity athletic competition for women." Historian Benjamin Rader emphasized the Women's Division's lasting importance, writing that its 1923 platform "served as a guiding principle for women's athletics until the late 1960s." This enduring importance was the result, as Ellen Gerber explained, of the Women's Division platform being "endorsed in toto by all groups most concerned with women's collegiate sport." Operating under the principle of "a game for every girl and every girl in a game." such organizations as the Women's Division advocated extensive intramural programs and no intercollegiate ones. Based on the belief that varsity teams and intercollegiate contests would shift attention and resources away from the vast majority of undergraduate women in order to support "a few super-athletes to represent the group and entertain the mass." most members of this influential organization opposed all efforts to encourage or continue women's intercollegiate competition.

During the 1920s and 1930s, other organizations often populated by the same people joined the fight for this same anti-competitive/women's control agenda. Working within the APEA, the National Section of Women's Athletics (NSWA) replaced the CWA in 1932 and began publishing numerous playing and coaching guides, health-related pamphlets, and standards guides, which spelled out precisely what benefits should result from women's sports and the potential dangers coaches and athletes should avoid. By 1936, the NSWA had established a network of state
associations to oversee the development and operation of all women's athletics within those states. and by 1937 more than 750 women worked on at least one of the NWSA committees. The NWSA worked closely with the Women's Division of the NAAF for most of the 1930s, but by the end of the decade both groups recognized that their assumed roles as the rule-makers and gate-keepers overlapped. In June 1940, the Women's Division merged into the American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation. Even though the organization itself ceased to exist after 1940, the Women's Division's legacy in the movement for the "controlled development of collegiate sport for women" maintained its importance.30

The opposition to women's intercollegiate athletic competition had much wider roots than mere fear of "super-athletes" dangerously attracting public attention. Indeed, female physical educators saw multiple reasons to resist intercollegiate competition. First, as their motto of "a game for every girl and every girl in a game" suggests, the women controlling women's college athletics had a specific, egalitarian, or democratic, vision of women's sport. Their understanding of a feminine democracy centered on cooperation and consensus, not the more masculine model of conflict and competition. They wanted their mostly white, middle class charges to have precisely equal athletic opportunities, with no one advantaged over others, intentionally avoiding elevating the elite athletes above the rest. This egalitarian approach also applied to the amounts of instructors' attention and the schools' physical resources that the argument held, should be available equally to all female students.31

The educators argued that treating all women as if they were exactly the same would prevent the undesired inflation of skilled students' egos and would also insure
that the tight budgets allocated to women's sports—budgets that would shrink even more
during the Depression years—serviced all of the students, not just the elite athletes. This
concern about adequate resources was legitimate. For example, in 1930 Anna Hiss, the
University of Texas director of women's athletics, agitated for more equal funding for
women's intramural athletics. The Texas Athletic Council, populated entirely by men,
denied her request for a $300 loan in April, and eventually agreed to provide only
$1,800, even though Hiss argued repeatedly that the women were entitled to at least
$2,500 in addition to a share of a student activity fee. Two years later, a mere three
weeks after allocating $300 to fund four male tennis players' trip to Pennsylvania, the
Athletic Council decided that "in view of the present large deficit the uncertain future of
our financial condition for the coming year" it could not support a $300 raise necessary
to make a women's physical educator a full-time employee.32 Later that same year, the
Council declared that "because of its present financial condition, [the Athletic Council]
would be limited to $4,500.00 for Intramurals for Men and $1,625.00 to Intramurals for
Women; that the Athletic Council feels that the requests of the two above departments
are meritorious."33 At Texas, the women's physical educators' fears for their budgetary
survival were meritorious as well.

While trying to create the proper democratic or egalitarian balance in athletic
offerings, the universities' athletic leaders also wanted to use sporting activities to teach
these young women "proper" values and habits. Such goals had existed from the very
beginning of women's college athletics, and the values physical educators wanted to
teach women differed greatly from the competitive ones they wanted to teach men.
Physical educators took great care to prevent their supervised athletic contests from becoming disruptive, publicized, competitive spectacles. Still, in a society that, by the 1930s, had come to accept and in a few instances celebrate, increased competition by women outside colleges, many officials felt compelled to explain their stance.

Countering criticisms that the Women's Division abhorred all competition, a historian of the group noted in 1941 that all games involved some sort of competition and that the Women's Division existed to promote games and sports for women; therefore, by definition, the Women's Division endorsed some forms of competition. It disapproved, however, of an "intense, highly specialized type of competition" because this activity "tends to tear down real values and set up false ones." This explanation begged the question: what were these real values?

According to a Women's Division spokesperson and many of her like-minded educators, competition was permissible only if it was controlled and if participants focused on the fun of the game not the score on the board. As long as the proper attitude prevailed, games were a great character-building tool, with competition serving as a "means to wholesome, healthful enjoyment, rather than an end to itself." In other words, competition was fine as long as it did not become like the men's or like the extra-collegiate women's athletic programs. In an important article published in 1930 entitled "Evils of Sports for Women," Helen Smith indicted the men's athletic situation:

"Competition is stressed over play and enjoyment. Great national organizations have developed whose members are, for the most part, men who are dependent upon sports for a livelihood... To be sure these men have developed and produced world champions, individuals, and teams, but for the most part they have forgotten American
youth as a whole and the fact that there should be opportunity for all, rather than a few. The women’s programs, Smith argued, were better because they “emphasiz[ed] the spirit of play and fellowship in their athletic activities for women.” while the men and “those in charge of industrial athletics” did not.

Another essential part of female physical educators’ effort to foster the correct attitude toward sport and self was their desire to “protect” young women athletes. This desire to protect had many meanings and manifestations. Some educators argued against women’s intercollegiate competition because such contests would require loosely supervised, overnight travel, removing the young women from the protective custody of in loco parentis policies of their respective institutions. To address this difficulty, innovative educators devised a more controlled and also cheaper way to allow college women to test their abilities against counterparts from other institutions without traveling by holding “telegraphic meets.” For these events, officials at participating colleges and universities recorded their own athletes’ efforts and then reported the results to a central location. While this tactic allowed a very controlled type of competition, it also worked against the creation of adoring crowds and sparking personal rivalries, and it eliminated the need for overnight travel, which many educators feared. Since they required no travel or overnight stays, the telegraphic meets were much cheaper than face-to-face competitions and thus offered practical advantages to physical educators overseeing small budgets.

Physical educators also wanted to guard against the twin terrors of the inappropriate use of, or development of, the women athletes’ bodies. Certainly well aware of the sexual innuendos that were an integral part of press coverage of women’s
athletics, the use of sex appeal by the working class industrial leagues as part of the marketing of the games and the sponsoring companies, and the development of the combination beauty contests/basketball tournaments run by the AAU in the 1930s. Female physical educators did not want to corrupt their young women by presenting them as sexual objects. They certainly did not want their young, middle-class women playing for softball teams named “Slapsie Maxie’s Curvacious Cuties” or “Balian Ice Cream Beauties.”

One way the educators tried to prevent this sexualizing of female athletes by creating separate facilities for women; another way was by advocating more traditional and modest athletic uniforms for their college women. In most instances, the women received separate but unequal athletic facilities. Although some schools, including the state universities of Maryland, Texas, and California, included women’s gymnasiums in the overall athletic building boom of the 1920s and early 1930s, in most places, the women got the old gym when universities built new ones for the men. Many state and national associations spoke out about the desire for proper women’s athletic attire. Smith highlighted the required use of bathing suits as basketball uniforms in 1930s, and at the 1938 Texas Athletic Federation of College Women convention, the members resolved that individual W.A.A. chapters should dedicate themselves to upholding national guidelines, including requiring “proper clothing for sports.”

Just as the guardians of women’s college sports did not want to see their young ladies’ sexuality exploited in athletic arenas or by athletic promoters or observers, they also wanted to insure that the sporting activities they sponsored did not rob students of their vital femininity. As Cahn has argued, the primary problem in twentieth century
American women's sport has been breaking down the socially constructed barriers separating ideals of athletes and real women: the physical educators of the 1930s helped to buttress these same barriers. By trying to create more feminine types of games, complete with different rules and expectations, female athletic leaders endorsed the idea that the desire for strenuous competition was a masculine quality, inappropriate for "proper" females. One male physical educator summed up the problems inherent in combining high-level sports and femininity with these telling words: "Speaking bluntly, one of the most precious qualities of girls' characters is endangered... Games like basketball and baseball are combative sports. They develop ugly muscles—muscles ugly in girls—as well as scowling faces and the competitive spirit. As an inevitable consequence your girls may find it more difficult to attract the most worthy fathers for their children."

Perhaps revealing some fears of race suicide, many men shared the women's fear that competitive sports could not only create more masculine-minded women but could also make the athletes less physically attractive, and therefore less likely to produce the "right" kind of children. Writing in 1929, Frederick Rand Rogers asked his audience in the American Physical Education Review to "imagine the international marathon race for women, or a boxing championship. In these activities the competitive elements rise to the greatest prominence." He continued, explaining how the rise of the competitive elements in females was undesirable: "Such events only tend to destroy all that is womanly in girls, whether the qualities considered be physical beauty, grace, social charm and adaptability, or capacity and desire for motherhood. But other competitive activities are only less harmful." Dr. Rogers never explained how distance running...
would "destroy . . . [the] desire for motherhood," but he did suggest that "fancy diving, where victory is determined by graceful execution alone" would provide acceptable competitive opportunities for women. The University of Tennessee devised another solution, combining a running race with a needle threading contest as an official intramural event.  

The physical educators of the 1920s and 1930s consciously created physical education and intramural sports programs that protected the college women from these identified dangers and that reaffirmed the proper desired values. The emerging ideologies of the 1920s effectively ended openly conducted women's intercollegiate competition, replacing almost every intercollegiate athletic program with a host of intramural and interclass contests. The variety of these programs illustrated the difficulty of putting a set of codified ideals into effect, no matter how often they are articulated or how many profess agreement. Through the health components of the athletic programs, the physical education curricula, the extensive intramural programs established for women, physical educators at American colleges and universities sought to indoctrinate their female students with the existing orthodoxy. 

In order to implement their new set of ideals, the leading physical educators first had to eradicate women's intercollegiate competition from the universities. They were largely successful in doing so, although their success was neither immediate nor absolutely complete. Ellen Gerber analyzed the results of several well-known surveys conducted by a prominent spokesperson of the anti-intercollegiate movement, Mabel Lee, in 1923, 1930, and 1936 about the status of women's intercollegiate competition. Gerber
concluded that Lee’s statistics indicated that relatively few universities had featured varsity women’s athletics before 1923 and that over the ensuing years the numbers of institutions sponsoring varsity women’s programs declined, as did the numbers of sports offered by those schools that maintained a varsity presence. This decline played out in a variety of ways at the institutional level, but at most places it did indeed occur.45

For example, at the University of Tennessee, the decision to abandon women’s intercollegiate athletics resulted from the combination of ideological and practical concerns. Ideologically, the growing prominence of the university’s women’s varsity basketball team during the 1920s caused concern for many: the women were attracting headlines as individual stars, traveling to games as far away as Kentucky and Virginia, competing against teams coached by men, and drawing attention away from the non-athletic women. As Adam Hornbuckle put it, “by the mid-twenties. varsity basketball at UTK reflected the skilled and competitive aspects which the [Women’s Division] condemned in women’s sports.” In fact, a student editorial defending women’s varsity basketball only highlighted the aspects that many educators found problematic: “Basketball is the only activity on the ‘Hill’ in which coeds compete with coeds of other colleges and universities.” and through which they could earn “recognition, honor, [and] glory.”46

Practical concerns united with ideological concerns in the mid-twenties to deny University of Tennessee women their desired attention and acclaim. The practical problem was that the move to disband women’s varsity programs had great success among U.T.K.’s rivals, leaving the team without adequate numbers of teams to play. After the university’s leading athletic officials, both men and women, received enough
negative replies to their questionnaire about the continuation of women’s varsity basketball, they decided in the Spring of 1926 to end the women’s varsity basketball program.47

This saga had parallels in countless schools across the nation, as almost all followed the same general pattern. On November 19, 1923, the University of California played Stanford University in a women’s field hockey match; according to Le’Ellen Kubow, the participants did not “realize it at then. but this was the last intercollegiate hockey game they would play for almost twenty-five years.”** Kubow cited the growing importance of the Women’s Division standards, standards that led to the demise of almost all openly conducted women’s intercollegiate athletics during the following years.

Physical educators addressed their concern about the proper development and control of young’s women’s bodies by insisting that only women administer women’s athletic programs and by including health and sanitary regulations in the athletic programs themselves. The 1923 Women’s Division platform articulated this position very well, including the resolution that “competent women be put in immediate charge of women and girls in their athletic activities even where the administrative supervision may be under the direction of men.” and another one called for women to work “toward the establishment of a future policy that shall place the administration as well as teaching and coaching of girls and women in the hands of carefully trained and qualified women.”*9 Other national and local publications continued to voice these desires throughout the 1920s and 1930s: in fact, the Women’s Division opposed the inclusion of women in the 1932 Olympic games, in part, because participation “places men in immediate charge of
athletic activities for girls and women." Even a cursory examination of the Women's
Division's state leadership structure reveals how seriously the members took this desire
for feminine leadership. All of the 48 state "chairmen" for 1931-32 were women, and all
but six were directly affiliated with specific colleges, universities, or high schools.50

This national desire for female leadership can also be seen at the local level. At
the University of Texas, both male and female administrators spoke out in the early
1930s against combining the men's and women's physical education and athletic
departments. Anna Hiss argued that the physical and philosophical differences between
men and women made such a combination dangerous. Since women "differ anatomically
and physiologically from men." and since women's athletics emphasized the
"development of all students" while men's intercollegiate athletics were for "the
development of the few and for the interest of the spectators," the two were simply
incompatible. Hiss also worried that, under the control of men, the women's physical
education courses and intramural sports would become a "practice school" for aspiring
teachers, a "experimental field" for budding researchers, and ultimately a concern
subordinate to all men's activities. After all, the increasing dominance of the Y.M.C.A.
over the Y.W.C.A. during the 1920s had demonstrated that when men's organizations
took an active interest in women's athletics, then the women's smaller and less well-
funded organization had great difficulty in preserving their domain and their ideals.51

Male physical educator L. T. Bellmont agreed with Hiss's conclusions, admitting
that many of her concerns had merit. After all, in his eyes as well, "the aims and ideals of
intercollegiate athletics are foreign to all other interests involved and must be considered
as a separate problem." Essentially, both Hiss and Bellmont argued that women should
continue to direct women’s athletics because, in Belmont’s words, “a spirit of harmony [could] best be obtained by completely separating all interests.”

Doctors had long made the same distinction that Hiss made, that women were anatomically and physiologically different than men. Anatomically, the argument went, women had several disadvantages when compared to men. Women had, according to Nancy Dosch’s summary, “smaller and shorter bones, smaller and shorter arms and legs, . . . more body fat, larger thighs, . . . a lower center of gravity, . . . smaller hearts, narrower chests, and more visceral organs than boys.” Moreover, women were physiologically different because they had less muscle strength, less endurance, and fewer opportunities to push themselves to their physical limits. These anatomical and physiological difference alone, however, did not necessitate trained women’s control over women athletes. For the women of the physical education associations, another biological difference did.

Most female physical educators believed that women should oversee college women athletes because only women possessed the special knowledge essential to preventing dangerous overexertion during the menstrual cycle, thus avoiding damage to women’s reproductive organs. Only women could, according to Marjorie Bateman in 1935, understand the special “problems and troubles” of the female athletes. After decades of concern about and restrictions on women’s activities during their period, opinions had slowly begun to change by the early 1930s. In 1932, Ethel Perrin, the associate director of the American Child Health Association’s Division of Health Education, contended that although there was “a general trend toward advocating normalcy of behavior during the menstrual period,” women should still avoid certain
activities during their period. While some doctors declared that "walking, golf, dancing, and "exercises which d[id] not involve undue fatigue or jumping" were acceptable, "strenuous gymnastics, tennis, basketball, and horseback riding" were not because they might damage the uterus. In fact, the American Student Health Association declared in 1932 that educators and athletes should not consider the menstrual cycle a "period of disability from the ordinary physical and mental activities of college life."^55

Nonetheless, concerns about women's reproductive organs led most athletic officials to believe that women should continue to avoid "abnormal" athletic events, "including those of a highly competitive variety where outside pressure gives to the winning of the game an exaggerated importance." Perrin explained that "the temptation in such a situation to go beyond one's strength is a disadvantage at all times, and particularly during the menstrual period."^56 She did not have to explain that, unlike men, properly trained women physical educators would not let such a competitive situation arise in the first place. The women running the intramural sports programs at the University of Texas in the mid-1930s incorporated these specific health concerns into their official statement of goals. Like most of their colleagues, these educators required medical examinations before and after athletic competitions, and they wanted to create "a system of supervision that shall assure a reasonable and sane attitude toward participation in activities at times of temporary physical unfitness." Not coincidentally, the same document also stressed the desirability of having activities "managed by professionally trained women."^57

In accordance with these beliefs and concerns, university physical educators structured their physical education and intramural sports programs so that they would
reward college women for meeting certain health and cleanliness standards. For example, W.A.A. officials at the University of Maryland established a point system that allowed female athletes to earn athletic awards in multiple ways, including bathing and having good posture. Maryland women could earn a "blazer with a circle M" by accumulating 1200 points, an "M" by earning 800 points, and "numerals" for 400 points, and they could earn these points in a variety of ways. Students could earn a total of 100 points, one quarter of the minimum necessary to receive an athletic honor, by meeting certain standards in the "Leadership, Scholarship, and Health" category. Maryland women received 25 athletic points for grade point averages between 3.5 and 4.0, and they earned 15 points for averages between 3.0 and 3.5. Moreover, they could earn a total of 25 athletic points by following certain health rules. If a female Maryland student had "an A grade in posture maintained thru the year," she received 15 points, the same number she earned if she raised her "B" or her "C" posture grade to an "A" during the year. Students could also earn 10 athletic points simply by having an "A" for "general health" during the year.58

Adhering to the same pattern, the University of California's W.A.A. had even more explicit health rules in place for its female athletes. Originally adopted in 1925, these health rules allowed individual women to earn ten athletic points for their respective classes in a university-wide competition. According to the September 23, 1929 "Women's Athletic Association Bulletin" the "Minimum Health Standard" had four requirements: 1) "get eight hours of sleep five nights a week;" 2) "eat a balanced diet of three meals at regular intervals;" 3) "eat no candy or similar sweets between meals;" and
4) “take a cold or tepid shower, plunge or sponge, daily.” At a minimum, the University of California women should have been well rested, well fed, and clean.

The California W.A.A. did not stop at identifying the absolute minimum; instead, the same bulletin identified the six components of the “Recommended Health Standard.” If California’s female athletes had followed their advisors’ recommendations, then they would have gotten at least 60 hours of sleep a week, eaten raw fruit and vegetables every day, had a minimum of one pint of milk daily, relaxed “completely for at least 15 minutes a day,” exercised outdoors for an hour a day, and given themselves “sufficient time” for all of their meals. Virtually all health professionals would still agree today that most women and men would be better off physically, and probably emotionally, if they followed these guidelines, but in the 1930s only university women received points toward athletic honors by following basic health rules.

Unfortunately for ideological educators, even at schools that emphasized such health rules, most college women did not want to follow them. Louise S. Cobb, in a 1929 review of the California W.A.A., admitted that replies to a “health standard questionnaire” were not encouraging. She reported that “the minimum health requirements were being ‘moderately’ kept by the majority” of California women, and that the percentage observing the rules declined as the students progressed from freshmen to seniors. Although the results from her questionnaire dissatisfied Cobb, surprise her. In fact, she noted, “few colleges have reported any attention to health rules and standards.” Still, Cobb and other physical educators did not believe that they should abandon their mission to teach certain body care and control standards just because most students did not follow health regulations.
Just as the directors of women's athletic programs tried to use athletic programs to teach proper dietary and cleanliness lessons, they also tried to use their athletic programs to teach their students desired attitudes toward life and athletics. Since the same women generally operated both sets of programs, these curricular and extracurricular programs worked together to teach and reaffirm in the women the same set of values and attitudes about sports and competition. The interlocking physical education and intramural programs that dominated the college woman's athletic landscape of the 1930s best illustrate how this attitude instruction worked.62

The physical educators in charge of American universities' women's intramural athletic programs structured their programs so that they would teach and reinforce the goals of the Women's Division and other official organizations. Administered by trained women, eager to protect the college women from physical and mental harm and from all sorts of exploitation, the intramural offerings available to most collegiate women were not conducive to attracting much individual attention and certainly not much individual publicity. The educators sought to fulfill the democratic dream of a "game for every girl" through a wide, and increasing, variety of sports and activities. Although by definition these sports and games involved competition, the nation's intramural programs sought to diminish the significance given to competition and to the spoils of victory, athletic awards with real value. If everything went according to design, the college women would be content to "play for play's sake." The evidence shows that everything did not always go according to plans.63

The decline of intercollegiate athletics and the rise of the new athletic orthodoxy during the 1920s and 1930s led to increased emphasis on women's intramural programs.
at colleges and universities across the nation. After closing the books on its intercollegiate women’s programs in June 1926, the University of Tennessee allowed its director of physical training for women, Anne Huddle, to replace the intercollegiate program with a point system based on winning honors. Female athletes earning 1000 points by participating in athletic activities would earn a letter sweater and a “T;” those that accumulated between 500 and 1000 points received only a “UT” monogram. In keeping with the practice of coupling athletic programs with personal development agendas, U.T.K. women with “A” academic averages received an additional 50 percent of their earned athletic points, and those with “B” averages got a 25 percent bonus.

Despite Huddle’s best efforts to make the point system comply with the Women’s Division’s desire for greater participation, between 1926 and 1929 the system became just as much a haven for elite athletes as the varsity program had been before it. As Adam Hornbuckle pointed out, in the first year of the new point system, only 10 women earned letter sweaters, a number fewer than had in 1921 when women’s varsity basketball had been prominent in Knoxville. As a consequence, in 1929 Huddle installed another type of intramural program in the place of the point system, emphasizing intersorority, interdormitory, and individual competitions as a way to attract fuller participation. As the program developed, however, barriers to an all-inclusive system remained. In the early 1930s, the sororities at Tennessee were the primary clients of the intramural system, dominating especially the team competitions, and it was not until 1935-36, when independent students (those not in sororities) had their own athletic club, that independent women gained full access to the intramural offerings at U.T.K. In 1937-38 this athletic club won the intramural championship. By the late 1930s, the modified
structure of the University of Tennessee intramural program had succeeded in attracting more total participation among U.T.K.'s undergraduate female population, but this participation was still centered on the winning of championships. In order to fulfill the primary "democratic" goal of the physical education associations, Tennessee administrators had to sacrifice allegiance to some of the profession's lesser goals, including diminishing the importance of championships. At Tennessee at least, students wanted to play for more than "play's sake."^ 65

The University of California also changed its structure of women's athletics in the late 1920s and 1930s, and, following the same pattern as Tennessee, these changes produced failure before eventually achieving qualified success. During the 1920s, the California W.A.A. experienced a marked decline in membership, both in terms of total numbers and in percentages of active female students. Out of a female student population of 4111 in 1921-22, the W.A.A.'s fall participation total was 1601, and the spring total was 1488, respectively 39.2 percent and 36.2 percent of U.C.B.'s student population. These numbers held relatively steady through 1926-27, normally falling between 26.8 percent and 39 percent. However, by 1929-30, the fall participation rate was only 10.6 percent and the spring rate was less than half of that, 4.2 percent of a female student population exceeding 4,200. California officials installed an intramural program in 1929 to reverse this downward spiral of interest and participation in W.A.A. activities while not competing directly with the more formal and organized W.A.A. sporting events.66

The first years of the intramural program did not go as smoothly as the W.A.A. membership and leadership had desired, and the program's ability to further the goals of
greater participation in women's athletics attracted serious scrutiny. Announced in the
"Women's Athletic Association Bulletin" in February 1930 as "a new project, but one
worthy of all the support we can give it," the intramural program almost immediately
registered more than 200 women and more than 20 organizations for swimming and
archery meets. This initial enthusiasm did not last. In fact, as W.A.A. faculty advisor
Louise Cobb explained in her fall 1930 review of the W.A.A., many "Californians"
doubted the wisdom of even continuing the intramural program after its first year, so
disappointing had its results been. Cobb reported, "the Intramural program which has
been fostered by W.A.A. for the particular purpose of increasing interest in sports among
a greater number of campus women has failed for two semesters to accomplish this
purpose." Cobb concluded her brief report with this stark assessment of the intramural
program and its sponsoring agency: "The whole subject of W.A.A.—its place among
student activities and how to increase its value to women students—must be seriously
considered. Students," Cobb declared, "should not be spending time and effort on a
needless enterprise." This was not a ringing endorsement of the intramural program.

The next term's report by the intramural manager stated that the previous pattern
of initial enthusiasm followed by an absence of sustained interest had repeated itself on
the Berkeley campus. In fact, the report indicated that an "enthusiastic burst" launched
the semester's intramural activities, with 22 of 36 residential or sorority houses
represented, but, by the third and final archery meet, only eight athletes showed up,
representing a mere five houses. The last swimming meet, held during a general campus
field day, attracted 17 swimmers from 6 houses and "a large audience." While these
numbers might have been mildly encouraging, the attitudes of the participants certainly
were not. Considering that the intramural program had as its stated goal to increase interest in athletics and to promote the joy of playing for play’s sake, the intramural manager was not optimistic when she reported “it was felt by several staff members present, that the girls who participated were not particularly enthusiastic, and did not seem to be enjoying their participation in the events.”

The failure of the intramural program to inspire more enthusiastic participation, or even just more participation, led to continuous discussions about the program’s fate and about how the administrators could reshape the program to meet their goals. Addressing the existing situation and Cobb’s concerns from the previous term, the intramural board of the W.A.A. again debated whether they should even permit intramural sports to continue. They agreed to give the program another test but eventually decided not to try again under the existing set-up. With the faculty advisor’s consent, the W.A.A. established an executive intramural board, with four women representing four different houses. Each executive board member had clear responsibilities for one of the following categories: secretarial duties, eligibility, recreational swimming, or publicity. However well conceived, the new organization could not overcome the lack of general student interest or the executive board’s lack of administrative ability. In September 1931, only 233 students signed up for their health examination, with 80 signing up for tennis, 63 for swimming, 49 for ping-pong, 43 for horse riding, and 30 for golf. By the end of the semester, only four women of the 30 had qualified and had retained their interest in a golf tournament, compelling the intramural board to cancel the tournament.

The intramural manager, Frederica Bernhard, noted the problems in the operation of intramurals and made several telling suggestions about how to remedy the situation.
She reported that despite the "great deal of time and effort" the women had expended on intramurals, "on account of the inefficiency of the chairman, the delays in publicity, [and] the lack of definite information and cooperation, the response and enthusiasm were very poor." To rectify the problem, Bernhard made a suggestion that, while addressing the reality of the circumstances at California, went against the established philosophy of the professional physical education societies regarding athletic awards. She recommended that "unless a system of points can be worked out which would permit honors to be won by the House, there will not be sufficient incentive to make a success of recreational sports." In other words, Bernhard formally acknowledged that the women of California were not satisfied with merely playing for play's sake, that they needed prizes and honor to make their athletic activities worthwhile and interesting. The next term, the W.A.A. developed precisely such a plan and, once again, resolved to improve its publicity efforts.  

The results of the increased publicity and the new incentives for the houses encouraged the members of the W.A.A. The numbers of participants increased in all measured categories from 1932 to 1933. In 1933, 16 organizations participated, compared to 10 in 1932, and, 66 women signed up for at least one archery event while only 21 had the year before. In the other intramural sport, swimming, 120 signed up in 1933 for at least one event, compared to 84 the year before. The rising interest led some in the fall of 1933 to consider expanding the intramural program in order to "include all the girls on campus in some activity as soon as possible," but the intramural board decided against expansion for the moment, preferring to concentrate on doing only a few things very well.
Over the next few years the program expanded to include a rising number of individual and team sports. These additions included badminton, fencing, golf, riding, tennis, and volleyball, and they attracted a much wider pool of interested athletes. In both the fall and spring terms of the 1936-37 academic year, more than 340 women participated in intramurals, representing more than 30 organizations. Frederica Bernhard reported that "Intramurals have grown considerably, and [are] still growing. Many changes and improvements are constantly being made." By the spring of 1939, the intramural program had become a vital supplement to California's physical education and more formalized W.A.A. sporting activities, and the numbers of participants testified to its newfound success. That term more than 170 women played in a baseball round robin tournament, and more than 70 women participated in badminton tournaments and swimming meets, with another 28 women testing their fencing skills against each other. All together, more than 280 different women participated in spring term intramurals, with at least 80 of them playing four or more sports. After initially languishing, the intramural program at California grew during the 1930s to fulfill its founders' goal of involving more students in athletics: however, to do this, the administrators had to compromise on other beliefs, sacrificing their opposition to athletic awards for the prize of greater participation and interest.²²

For the University of Maryland the decade of the 1930s was also a decade of expansion and experimentation in women's sports. In 1929-30, UM hired its first women's athletic director and continued its already existing busy schedule of women's sports, conducted primarily on an interclass basis. The Maryland women had opportunities to participate in field hockey, tennis, "two-division basketball," rifle,
baseball, volleyball, bowling, and soccer, in addition to required dancing classes for the freshmen and sophomores. That year the university shifted away from its previous policy of awarding athletic letters to stand-outs in individual sports, preferring instead a new honors system that rewarded participation in a multiple sports. This conformed with the national athletic philosophy of discouraging recognition of exceptional ability and encouraging, instead, maximum participation. The Maryland yearbook reported on the new system’s success: “it caused a larger number of participants to come out for each sport, and served as an incentive for many who were previously uninterested.”

The 1931-32 construction of a new gymnasium, and the creation of a women’s physical education major, helped generate even more interest in athletics and intramural sports among the 325 Maryland women. Under the leadership of the Dean of Women, Adele Stamp, and the Women’s Director of Athletics, Edith Ball, the athletic program had expanded the previous year, adding track, golf, horseback riding, hiking, and archery to the athletic menu. The addition of these minor and individual sports forced another revision of the Maryland athletic point system. In 1931-32, the students’ interest caused further modifications of the intramural system: so many women wanted to play basketball that they had to form three separate teams for each class instead of the single team that had previously played.

The combination of teaching physical and social skills through athletic training continued its popularity at Maryland throughout the decade, but as the popularity grew so did the competitive impulses of the participants. In 1933, the student yearbook reported that the teams had played basketball under new rules but that the sport had “attracted as large a number of enthusiasts as in former years.” The next year, the year book
documented a "greater interest in physical activities" than ever before, as evidenced by "the fact that the number of girls who turned out for after-school sports [was] larger than that of any preceding year." That year, Maryland instructors reemphasized their dance classes because they were "very beneficial in promoting grace, poise, and good posture among the women students."

While the female students of the University of Maryland were learning poise, they were also learning that the restrictions suggested by the professional physical education associations were not inviolable. For example, the W.A.A. contributed to Homecoming festivities by promoting a series of athletic contests among the different class teams. Although women alumni were the intended audience, the connection of women's athletes with large crowds and men's football must have been disquieting to some. Moreover, instead of selecting the hockey teams based solely on class rank, the Maryland women chose them based purely on skill, trying to create evenly matched teams and more competitive contests.

By the following year, the association between women's and men's athletics had grown much closer. The W.A.A. began in 1934-35 to model its basketball activities on the men's intramural programs, discarding the practice of having teams practice and play only a couple of games to determine a champion among the classes. In that system's place, the women installed "a decided innovation in women's sports," creating "a very active schedule" to decide an ultimate winner. The yearbook reported on the success of the experiment and the reasons for that success, "this form of intramurals was so popular among the co-eds that an attempt will be made to introduce it into other women's sports." It seemed that the men's style intramurals made "a fuller and better rounded out schedule
of competition for the girls, in addition to allowing the individual player and groups of players a better opportunity for engaging in more actual contests than before.”

The women's desire for more competition was evident in their activities over the rest of the decade. The next year the basketball tournament expanded, including three divisions (dormitory, sorority, and non-residential students), and a tournament among the division champions. According to reports, "there was sufficient friendly rivalry to make the games interesting for spectators as well as participants and the tournament was voted a great success." After experiencing the basketball tournament, the Maryland women made plans to emulate the men's system even further by applying the new format to other sports, including hockey and baseball, and modifying the W.A.A. points system to recognize participation in these events. In 1936-37, ten teams participated in the basketball tournament with the "Day-Dodgers B" beating the "Tri Delts" in the men's style tournament and the juniors winning the regular class competition. These types of tournaments gained more prominence and popularity throughout the rest of the decade, and the editors of the 1939-40 yearbook sought to explain why: "The added stress placed on intramural games was compensation for the dearth of intercollegiate competition.”

This complaint about the "dearth of intercollegiate competition" for women was one that white women at almost every American college or university could have voiced in the 1920s and 1930s. As a result of a stifling consensus among leading physical educators and their professional organizations, almost all American universities limited their women's athletic options to physical education courses and intramural programs. These two components of women's college athletes generally shared the same
administrators and the same goals: to prepare middle-class women for active lives and to protect the women from the influences and dangers of men’s and working-class women’s athletics. The college women’s training addressed almost all aspects of the “proper” lifestyle, ranging from posture, to diet, to dress, to attitude. More than anything else, educators intended the women’s college athletic programs of the late 1920s and 1930s to communicate the virtues of consensus, modesty, teamwork, and the importance of playing sports for play’s sake, not for individual awards or recognition.

As the experiences of educators across the country illustrated, however, this value communication was easier said than done, more easily planned than executed. The educators found it difficult enough to moderate the competitive impulses and desires of women within their own institutions; they would find it even more difficult to reconcile their professed belief in the evil of vigorous competition with the students’ desires to test their abilities against athletes from other schools. Even in carefully orchestrated events designed to mitigate all competitive drives, this proved difficult at best and impossible at worst.

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For a good overview of the “new woman” in the 1920s, see Sara M. Evans, *Born for Liberty: A History of Women in America* (New York: The Free Press, 1989), chapter eight, “Flappers, Freudians, and All That Jazz.” Evans suggested that “the college generation of the twenties was not nearly as rebellious as they and their elders believed,” because, although they often experimented, the generation ultimately reaffirmed existing customs in terms of sexuality and life goals. Evans noted that the fears of becoming too masculine in figure or orientation motivated many women to oppose competitive athletics for women. Benjamin Rader, *American Sports: From the Age of Folk Games to the Age of Televised Sports*, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1996), chapter nine, *passim.*


Cahn, *Coming on Strong*, 56. See also Larry Engelmann, *The Goddess and the American Girl: The Story of Suzanne Lenglen and Helen Wills* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988). To get a sense of the immense personal interest in the first competition between these two athletes, see Engelmann’s third chapter, entitled “Ballyhoo.”


In 1922, the American Physical Education Association passed this resolution: “We regard the representation of America at the Women’s International Athletic Games held in Paris in July, 1922, as inopportune and unauthorized by any national representative body and, in view of the present state of women’s athletics in this country, we are not in favor of international competition at this time.” See “Summary and Discussion on Athletics for Girls: Atlantic City Recreation Congress. October 9-12, 1922,” *American Physical Education Review* 28 (January 1923): 69. Seven years later, in 1929, the same organization explicitly targeted the Olympics with its resolutions: “Whereas, training for formal spectator athletic events like the Olympic Games tends to restrict interest and limit the use of public facilities, such as schools, colleges, parks, playgrounds, and other civic recreational systems to those practicing for special events, and Whereas, the exploitation of individuals coincident with such contests tends to subordinate an interest in athletic activity and accomplishment in such activity to an interest in awards, such as public adulation, financial gain, or both . . . Resolved, that the Section on Women’s Athletics of the American Physical Education Association . . . go on record as being opposed to girls and women entering the Olympic Games.” See “Resolutions of the Section on Women’s Athletics of the American Physical Education Association,” *American Physical Education Review*, 34 (May 1929): 310.


Susan Cayleff argued that physicians often considered athletic women in the 1920s and the 1930s as “inverts,” as lesbians. Babe’s working class roots, when considered with her demonstrated excellence in “masculine” sports such as track, javelin, baseball, and basketball, led many to question her sexuality. As Cayleff wrote most “experts” believed that young women “ought to be training for heterosexual relations and popularity, not competing in sports.” See Susan E. Cayleff, *Babe: The Life and Legend of Babe Didrikson Zaharias* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 19. In 1999, a panel of ESPN judges named Didrikson as the tenth best athlete of the twentieth century, citing her excellence in “basketball, track, golf, baseball, tennis, swimming, diving, boxing, volleyball, handball, bowling, billiards, skating, and cycling.” See http://espn.go.com/sportscentury/features/00014147.html.

Both Cahn and Rader wrote about a famous 1947 *Life* article entitled, “Babe is a Lady Now; The World’s Most Amazing Athlete Has Learned to Wear Nylons and Cook for Her Huge Husband.” Cahn also described a *Saturday Evening Post* article that used Didrikson’s “big breasts, a small waist, and thirty-seven inch hips” as proof that this former tomboy had become a woman. See Cahn 216.

Markels’ “Bloomer Basketball at Ohio State: 1904-1907” suggests that the history of the suppression of women’s athletics at colleges is more complex than most accounts present. She argues that male athletic leaders played a much more significant role in the termination of the women’s programs than most historians have acknowledged.

Rader describes the leadership of the National Amateur Athletic Foundation’s Women’s Division as national “leaders in women’s education, the Girl Scouts, YWCAs, and women’s clubs.” *American Sports*, 215; Ronald Smith, “Women's Control of American College Sport: The Good of Those Who Played or an Exploitation by Those Who Controlled?” *Sport History Review*, 29 (1998): 103-120, quotes from 103. Susan Cahn noted that other women’s organizations had used similar tactics and agreed with Smith’s assessment of motivations if not the label of exploitation. She wrote, “in hindsight, this strategy looks like a rearguard action to conserve professional educators’ status and outdated standards of female propriety.” See *Coming on Strong*, 67.


Rader, American Sports, 216. The sixteen resolutions adopted by the Women's Division included the following: "4. Resolved, in order to develop those qualities which shall fit girls and women to perform their functions as citizens.

(a) That their athletics be conducted with that end definitely in view and be protected from exploitation for the enjoyment of the spectator or for the athletic reputation or commercial advantage of other organization.

(b) That schools and other organization shall stress enjoyment of the sport and development of sportsmanship and minimize the emphasis which is at present laid upon individual accomplishment and the winning of championships . . .

5. Resolved, that for any given group we approve and recommend such selection and administration of athletic activities as makes participation possible for all, and strongly condemn the sacrifice of this object for intensive training (even though physiologically sound) of the few . . .

11. Resolved, that suitable costumes for universal use be adopted for the various athletic activities."

For a complete list of the resolutions, see the appendix to Agnes Wayman. "Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation." Journal of Health and Physical Education 3 (March 1932): 7, 53-54.

Ellen Gerber, "The Controlled Development of Collegiate Sport for Women, 1923-1936." Journal of Sport History 2 (1975): 10. These organizations included the Committee on Women's Athletics of the A.P.E.A., the Association of Directors of Physical Education for Women in Colleges and Universities, the Athletic Conference of American College Women, the American Association of University Women, and the National Association of Deans of Women, all of which endorsed the platform between 1923 and 1926.


Sefton, The Women's Division National Amateur Athletic Federation. 12. In 1930 the WDNAAF had 650 total institutional and individual memberships, and in 1938 it had 768. Sefton, The Women's Division National Amateur Athletic Federation, 32. The organization was so important that Ohio State's Mary Yost wrote, in 1941, that "I doubt if there is a woman in Physical Education who does not know what it was and what it stood for." "Girls Athletics," 2, (Athletics: Girls: 1940s," 9/e-5/a/8), Accession 84/94, TOSELA.


See number five in the list of the 1923 Women's Division resolutions, available in footnote 26.


See number five in the list of the 1923 Women's Division resolutions, available in footnote 26.
program of work.” See Anna Hiss to H. Y. Benedict, 23 May 1930, (“W.A.A. 1930,” 3R237), University of Texas Physical Training for Women Records, CAH, UTA.

33 Athletic Council Minutes, 22 May 1939, University of Texas Athletic Council Minutes.

34 For a discussion of the intended character development associated with the early years of women’s college basketball, see again, Paul, “Clara Gregory Baer: Catalyst for Women’s Basketball,” 45; Sefton, The Women’s Division National Amateur Athletic Federation, 29.


38 In 1940, Ohio State physical educator Dorothy Sumption described a telegraph meet as “a competitive even between two or more schools in which each team telegraphs the results of the competition to the other school, or to a central designated school or organization, is called a telegraphic meet. The teams do not actually meet each other. Only the results are compared, and the winner is this selected.” Dorothy Sumption, Sports for Women (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1940), 224.

39 For details about the joining of beauty pageants and basketball tournaments, see Cahn, Coming on Strong, 94-96. See also Stephanie L. Twin, ed., Out of the Bleachers: Writings on Women and Sport (Old Westbury, NY: The Feminist Press, 1979), xxx.

40 The University of Maryland yearbook, the Reveille reported on the construction of a new women’s dormitory and gymnasium in its 1932 edition. The author wrote, “These buildings fill a long-term need on our campus. Prior to this year Physical Education for women was of necessity a bit haphazard. The only place for intramural sports and games was the men’s gymnasium. This year, with our own building, we have had a very successful program of intramural sports.” The author continued, “At the present writing an athletic field for coeds is in the process of construction, and in a short time, women students at the University will have a rather complete physical education plant of their own.

The University of Texas participated in the national educational building spree in the 1920s and early 1930s, erecting new men’s and women’s gymnasium, a new student union, and a new auditorium. The new women’s gymnasium, completed in 1931, included 16 offices, three large gymnasium and one smaller one, a dancing studio, a library, shower and dressing rooms, a pool, and reception areas. The new outdoor complex included an archery range, twelve tennis courts, two hockey fields, a short, six-hole golf course, and some golf practice areas, among other areas. See “University of Texas.” (“U.T.S.A. History,” 3R244), University of Texas Physical Training for Women, CAH, UTA.

Savage wrote, “in comparison with the facilities lavished upon men students, the gymnasium provisions for women usually leave much to be desired. When a new gymnasium is erected for the men, the older, disused structure is generally turned over to the women. Sometimes a temporary wooden frame structure, partly given over to other uses, is built for the women. Of the institutions visited, California Coe, University of Iowa, Ohio State, and the Oregon Agricultural College have excellent gymnasiums for their women students.” See Savage, American College Athletics, 91.

41 “Report on T.A.F.C.W. Convention—Waco,” [1938], (“A.F.C. Materials, Correspondence, etc.” 3R246), U. T. Physical Training for Women Records, CAH, UTA. The proper way to display active female bodies had long been a concern of college officials. The University of California agreed to play the first women’s intercollegiate basketball game on the West Coast against Stanford University only with the agreement that no men could watch the game; instead more than 700 women saw this inaugural match. A
letter to the editor of the Berkeley newspaper applauded this policy, writing, "playing in the open, before a lot of college men, it seems to us to be lowering a certain standard of womanhood. It is the place of the co-ed, with her high education, to advance womanhood toward the ideal. Does she do this in an open contest? There is a quiet undertone around the college which is decidedly against the reputation of our University being put in jeopardy by such a display of advanced womanhood." See Lynne Fauly Emery and Margaret Toohey-Costa, "Hoops and Skirts: Women's Basketball on the West Coast, 1892-1930s," Hult and Trekell, eds., *A Century of Women's Basketball.* 138. Quote found on 138-139.

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42 Cahn, *Coming on Strong,* 4.

43 The quote is attributed to one of the author's colleagues named Rogers in Gittings, "Why Cramp Competition?" 11. The quote comes from Frederick Rand Rogers, "Olympics for Girls?" *School and Society* 30 (August 10, 1929): 194. Laura Robicheaux also isolated this particular statement by Rogers and provided more context. Rogers not only argued that athletics might prevent women from attracting "the most worthy fathers for their children," he contended that women should concentrate on "provid[ing] the most healthful physiques for child bearing and build[ing] the most maternal emotional and social patterns." He continued, "Intense forms of physical and psychic conflicts, of which athletics provide the best example in modern life, and of which Olympic games provide the extreme type, tend to destroy girls' physical and psychic charm and adaptability for motherhood." See Laura Robicheaux, "An Analysis of Attitudes Toward Women's Athletics in the U.S. in the Early Twentieth Century." *Canadian Journal of History of Sport and Physical Education* 6 (May 1975): 18.

44 Frederick Rand Rogers, "Competition for Girls," *American Physical Education Review* 34 (March 1929): 168-169. Alice Allene Sefton expressed similar sentiments in 1937 in an article entitled, "Must Women in Sports Look Beautiful?" Sefton wrote, "It is usually when they are exceeding their powers that women appear unlovely. When a woman sets her jaw in grim determination to win at any cost, or plays so long that lines of fatigue draw her face into contortions, and she loses control of her coordinations, then she sacrifices some of her beauty because she is violating principles of health. The game has gone beyond the limits of beneficial activity. That look of ghastly strain, that awkwardness and lack of equilibrium and that breathlessness should not be chalked against the sport itself, but should be controlled through careful guidance, frequent check-ups, and suitable environmental conditions." See Alice Allene Sefton, "Must Women in Sports Look Beautiful?" *Journal of Health and Physical Education* 8 (October 1937): 510. The Tennessee student newspaper described the competition with these words, "four pledges ran the length of Jefferson Hall, one at a time, carrying with them a needle in one hand and thread in the other. A fifth pledge threaded the needle, returning it to the other, who ran back. Then another started until all four had run." See Katherine Hale, "Fair Sex has Become Prominent in Intramural Sports This Year," *Orange and White* 27 February 1930, 7.

45 Gerber, "The Controlled Development of Collegiate Sport for Women," 2-4. Joan S. Hult has pointed out that Lee's sample contained many biases. Lee sent her questionnaires only to members of organizations that opposed varsity competition for women, people Hult believed were "likely to be predisposed to a nonvarsity model." Moreover, Hult pointed out that most of the institutions that did not respond to the 1930 survey actually had varsity teams on campus. See Hult, "Governance of Athletics for Girls and Women," 71-72.

46 Adam R. Hombuckle, "Women's Sports and Physical Education at the University of Tennessee: 1899-1939" (M.A. thesis, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1983). See pages 52-77 for a discussion of the development of varsity basketball at the University of Tennessee, and see 79 and 83 for the two quotes. The second quote appeared in the University of Tennessee Student newspaper, the *Orange and White* on 8 April 1926, page 1.

47 Hombuckle, "Women's Sports and Physical Education at the University of Tennessee: 1899-1939," 83-84.
Le'Ellen Kubow, “Once Upon a Time There Was This Stick . . .,” 14 June 1971, (“1:12,” CU-67.1), Student Papers on University of California, Berkeley, Sports and Other Subjects Relating to Athletics, BL, UCB.

“Resolutions of the Section on Women’s Athletics of the American Physical Education Association,” 53.


T. L. Belmont to H. Y. Benedict, 27 February 1930, (“Statistics, 1929-30,” 3R236), University of Texas Physical Training for Women Records, CAH, UTA.

Nancy Cole Dosch, “The Sacrifice of Maidens’ or Healthy Sportswomen?: The Medical Debate over Women’s Basketball,” in Hult and Trekell, eds., A Century of Women’s Basketball, 126. For the best single study of medical views of women’s athletic abilities, and the importance of these views, see Patricia A. Vertinsky, The Eternally Wounded Woman: Women, Doctors, and Exercise in the Late Nineteenth Century (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994).


Perrin, “Health Safeguards in Athletics for Girls and Women.” 93-94. Educators worried about the emotional damage that athletics could cause as well as the physical damage. On top of encouraging unfeminine competitive desires many feared that the pressure of playing highly competitive games was too much for the young women to bear.

“University of Texas Sports Association and Intramural Sports for Women,” 19355, (“History of Clubs and U.T.S.A.” 3R244), University of Texas Physical Training for Women Records, CAH, UTA.


Maryville College in East Tennessee had a similar, but even more explicit, set of health rules as part of its women’s athletic honors program. According to the “Point System of Athletic Awards,” Maryville women could earn one-sixth of the points required to “letter” by following proscribed health regulations.
As at California, these rules addressed almost all aspects of the women's daily lives. For example, to get maximum credit the women were supposed to sleep "from time lights cut out until 6 a.m., during any 23 days out of 30 consecutive days," with the windows "open top to bottom. As at California, the rules required the athletes to take daily baths in water not "too hot or too cold," even during their menstrual periods. The Maryville women could not snack unless the morsels had administrative approval, nor could they try to wash down "unmasticated food" with water. They could never drink "coco cola." Finally, the women had to change their underwear daily and to "evacuate" their bowls daily, "at regular time, if possible preferably after breakfast." See "Point System of Athletic Awards." ("Athletics-Awards, Point System of," Box 1), Special Collections and Archives, Maryville College.

Gerber, "The Controlled Development of Collegiate Sport for Women," 9. Gerber noted that "few departments of physical education for women separated their three functions of teacher preparation, general physical education and extra-curricular physical recreation or sport into different staff responsibilities. The same people who ran the sport programs conducted the teacher education programs and this indoctrinated the teachers-to-be in the national philosophy. The result was a remarkable unanimity of opinion expressed in the literature and practices for several decades." The example of the University of Texas illustrates the close coordination of activity and education programs. Early in the 1930s, one Texan explained how her university's different components worked together toward common goals: "surrounded by these very fine facilities, by the organization of class work, and by the activities of the Women's Athletic Association and being a definite participant for three years, the University of Texas girl is given every opportunity to develop her love of activity, her vital forces, and her power as a leader." Even after 1933-34, when the University of Texas inaugurated a novel experiment that officially divided the women's intramurals and the University of Texas Sports Association (U.T.S.A. was the name given in 1932 to the Texas W.A.A.), the programs remained symbiotic. Although each of the two programs enjoyed more autonomy than at almost all other institutions, they were by no means completely independent because of the continuing personnel overlap. Anna Hiss, the Director of Physical Training for Women still served as the Director of Intramural Sports and the Faculty Advisor of the U.S.T.A. Moreover, three additional members of the physical education faculty had seats on the intramurals committee, and the intramural council's secretary also functioned as the General Secretary of the U.S.T.A. See "University of Texas Sports Association and Intramural Sports for Women," 1.

For an example of the traditional view of women's athletics, see the University of Texas where the stated purpose of the women's intramural program was to have "a sport for every girl and every girl in a sport." The "aims" also included these sentiments: "to establish ideals based on participation rather than competition," to see that sports are wisely chosen, wisely promoted, and wisely supervised;" "to promote competition that stresses enjoyment of sport and the development of good sportsmanship and character rather than those types that emphasize the making and breaking of records and the winning of championships for the enjoyment of spectators or for the athletic reputation or commercial advantage of the institution and the organization;" and "to promoted interest in awards for athletic accomplishment that have little or no intrinsic value," among other things. See "University of Texas Sports Association and Intramural Sports for Women," 4-5.

Hornbuckle, "Women's Sports and Physical Education at the University of Tennessee: 1899-1939," 84-86.

Hornbuckle, "Women's Sports and Physical Education at the University of Tennessee," 89-92, 94-100.

Nancy Brown, "A Comparison of the Number of Participants in the Women's Athletic Association Before and After the Abolishment of the Physical Education Requirement," 3-4, ("U.C. W.A.A." 3:10), CU-67.1. Student Papers on University of California, Berkeley, Sports and Other Subjects Relating to Athletics, BL, UCB. For the intended lack of competition between intramural programs and the regular W.A.A. teams and sports, see Frederica Bernhard, "W.A.A. Intramural Sports, Fall. 1933." ("I.M. Managers Reports," CU-283:4). Women's Athletic Association Records, 1921-1972, BL, UCB. In this
report Bernhard noted that "the Board wishes to continue its policy of providing an opportunity for competition for a relatively small number of students, particularly those students who are not attending regular coaching practices of the various sports in W.A.A. It feels that an understanding of conditions here makes it quite clear that a large intramural organization cannot function in competition with so many other campus activities."


75 Reveille 32 (1933): no page number given, see “Women’s Basketball” section.

76 Reveille 32 (1934): 203.

77 Reveille 32 (1934): 203.

78 Reveille 32 (1934): 203 and 206.

79 The Terrapin (1936): 175. The UM yearbook changed its name in 1935-36 from the Reveille to The Terrapin.

80 The Terrapin (1936): 185; The Terrapin (1937): 164-165.

81 The Terrapin (1940): 148-149.
CHAPTER 5

"IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO LEGISLATE OUT OF AN INDIVIDUAL THE INSTINCTIVE URGE TO COMPETE": CHALLENGES TO THE ANTI-COMPETITIVE MODEL IN WOMEN'S SPORTS

"In the discussions to date, our group has defended the present type of Sports Day with positively religious fervor. They can't bear the thought of any compromise that involves whole teams from one college competing against whole teams from another."
Louise Cobb, University of California, 1929

"Being a lady does not mean being prissy, it's just an inward culture . . . always being polite and not saying things to hurt people's feelings. You could be as tough as I don't know what on that basketball court, but you still have those same principles."
Ruth Glover, Bennett College basketball player during the 1930s

"It is impossible to legislate out of an individual the instinctive urge to compete—'competition in the very soul of athletics.' It is possible to guide effectively organizations for the promotion of sports toward the sound administration of women's competition."
Gladys Palmer, Ohio State Director of Women's Physical Education, 1938

"I agree with your statement that good competition has a contribution to make to the education of women and that it is our responsibility to provide that competition. We are doing it. We can do it better but not through the channel of organized intercollegiate athletics."
Elizabeth Halsey, Iowa State University, 1941.

By the 1930s most white college and university physical educators, male and female, professed a belief in the anti-competitive model of women's sport. They designed their women's college athletic programs to inculcate in their predominately white, middle-class student population a particular style of body care and presentation as
well as a certain "feminine" attitude toward athletics and competition. According to this orthodoxy, proper women neither needed nor desired high-level competition. Instead, women-controlled athletic programs with health rules and low-stress games and sports would preserve and protect the student's "vital organs," their general health, and their feminine attraction from the dangers found in men's college athletics and in the working-class, extra-collegiate competitions, events that could cause irreparable damage in stressful, individualized, and highly competitive contests. This was the overwhelming consensus, and a chorus of voices sang its praise throughout the late 1920s and the 1930s.

From the very beginning, however, some female physical educators refused to adopt the entire platform of the Women's Division and its sister organizations without question; simply put, the anti-competition model was never completely monolithic. In colleges and universities all across the nation, physical educators labored to reconcile their profession's beliefs with many female students' desire to test their abilities in vigorous competitions, both in and out of their home institutions. According to the traditional narrative, during the 1920s and 1930s Play Days served as the main vehicle for providing women's intra-institutional athletics, and these Play Days adhered closely to the stated goals of limiting competition. During the 1930s, Sports Days emerged as more a competitive version of the Play Days, but they were still closely controlled events sanctioned by the leading physical educators of the day. The physical education establishment also recognized the legitimacy of telegraphic meets, in which university teams competed "safely" against each other by eliminating traveling and the distractions and temptations of crowds. These telegraphic meets provided female college athletes limited, but real, opportunities to compare their abilities against athletes at other
universities, and they also led in many instances to the type of attention and acclaim that most educators wanted their students to avoid.

While the national associations of physical educators worked to control and moderate the competitive outlets open to college women, permitting contests in a limited numbers of ways while always insisting upon strict supervision, alternatives always existed. The most subversive, controversial, and largely hidden, one was the continuation of high-level intercollegiate competition. The evidence shows that the anti-competitive establishment never completely eradicated women's intercollegiate athletics and that its leaders knew it. While this limited persistence of intercollegiate athletics was, most believed, an unfortunate mistake, the isolated and unpublicized local tournaments posed no serious threat to the health and welfare of the vast majority of college women or to the jobs of their physical educators. The dynamic changed in the late 1930s and early 1940s when a contingent from Ohio State University proposed, promoted, and presented a national intercollegiate golf tournament for women. Arising out of local and national conditions, this golf tournament represented many things that the physical education establishment loathed. Importantly, it also represented many values and ideas that the national organizations endorsed, but this notable consensus went largely ignored in the contentious spring and summer preceding the tournament. A close examination of the circumstances that led up to the revival of openly conducted intercollegiate competition for women, as well as the controversy the tournament aroused, will contribute to scholars' understanding of the consensus that existed about the use of sports to promote certain proper feminine values, the emerging diversity of understanding about what were
proper middle-class, feminine activities, and the growing disagreement about the best ways to teach desired values to college women.

It is important to point out that the Ohio State-led challenge to the consensus was novel only among white physical educators. As a group, female physical educators at historically black colleges of the 1920s and 1930s offered the most complete rejection of the anticompetitive model. Although some black female leaders argued that women should not waste their time, energy, or resources on sports, those schools that allowed women to play found that they did so enthusiastically. In 1939, a survey reported that 75 percent of black colleges supported women's intercollegiate sport while only 17 percent of predominantly white schools did. Rita Liberti argued in her study of women's athletics at Bennett College between 1928 and 1942 that there was no uniform reaction among African-American colleges to the physical educators' push to abandon women's intercollegiate athletics. In fact, as many institutions were discarding their women's programs in the late 1920s, many African-American institutions were building more substantial women's programs.

Officials and athletes at Bennett College and elsewhere saw no inherent conflict between ideals of femininity and competition; in fact, Bennett College president, Dr. David Jones, enthusiastically supported women's intercollegiate basketball as a way to breed confidence, leadership skills, and social skills in the athletes. One former Bennett basketball player explained it this way to Liberti: "being a lady does not mean being prissy, it's just an inward culture... always being polite and not saying things to hurt people's feelings. You could be as tough as I don't know what on that basketball court,
but you still have those same principles."³ Ruth Arnett, an African-American leader in
the Y.W.C.A. and in public recreation, shared these beliefs, arguing against her
profession's dominant ideology and making a positive link between athletic competition
and the development of proper women. According to Cahn, Arnett "employ[ed] a
concept of womanhood that embraced strength, self-reliance, and competitive spirit."
Arnett argued that African Americans should "encourage our girls to be 'tomboys.' Let
them enter any game of sport and recreation that the boy enters. Let's teach them to be
real girls!"⁴

Clearly Arnett's definition of assertive, confident, and self-reliant "real" girls did
not match the white physical educators' views of "real" womanhood, although as
historian Stephanie Shaw has pointed out, the desire to create well-mannered, well-
dressed, moral ladies who could serve as ambassadors to society at large was even
stronger among black female collegians than among their white counterparts. Black
women students could not anticipate leading lives of leisure after graduation; therefore,
they prepared most of their lives to be "self-confident, high-achieving, socially
responsible adults." The more accepting attitude that most black colleges had toward
women's athletics reflects this desire to prepare achievement-oriented, self-reliant
adults.⁵

Likewise, inter-institutional contests never disappeared from the exclusively or
predominately white college landscape, but they took on new forms during the anti-
competition era, most notably as Play Days, Sports Days, and telegraphic meets. Cahn
described Play Days as a "model of democratic sport" because the events gathered
together students from many different colleges and universities, divided them into
temporary teams, and did not differentiate among the participants' various skill levels. The national physical education societies endorsed these Play Days for these same reasons, because they allowed for numerous women to participate in a variety of sports without representing their institutions even for just one day. This arrangement prevented the creation of real team allegiances and passions for winning championships; the women could concentrate instead on the joy of playing for play's sake.⁶

Athletic officials designed their Play Days so that the events would work with other college athletic activities to socialize the athletes in specific ways. Foremost, of course, the Plays Days reinforced by their very structure the profession's disdain for highly competitive, highly trained athletes who prioritized winning and championships over the spirit of joyous participation. By involving large numbers of athletes of varying skill levels, the Play Days also prevented the isolation and adulation of highly skilled female athletes over their less able colleagues. Moreover, the ideal Play Day taught the participants other valuable social lessons and skills through the associated non-athletic events as well. For example, in 1929 Wellesley College hosted the first New England College Play Day, with 250 women from Wheaton, Simmons, Radcliffe, Boston University, and Wellesley participating. The day began with a "mixer" and continued throughout the day with "every sort of activity popular with girls and women" offered. The day's grand conclusion was a buffet dinner, complete with "singing, novelty dances, and announcement of scores and the awards." Even the award ceremony adhered to the profession's beliefs about the undesirability of awards with intrinsic value; the awards were "original gumdrop animals and dolls made by some of the girls." By stressing a
sense of sisterhood and shared purposes, this Play Day reinforced many of the stated goals of the national physical education associations. 7

In its interactions with Stanford University and Mills College, the University of California epitomized the types of changes that most American colleges underwent as a result of the profound professional shift of the early 1920s. California women had a long history of competitions against women from nearby colleges and universities, and they continued that tradition throughout the 1920s and 1930s but in much different forms and with a great deal of discussion. During the 1910s and the early 1920s, California women competed against Stanford and Mills women in a variety of sports on an interclass-intercollegiate basis. This meant that the sophomores from California would battle for supremacy against the sophomores from Stanford or Mills, and the other classes would do likewise, often in conjunction with the “Big Game” between Stanford and California’s football teams. Other times the three schools would meet together in “Triangular Sports Days” for the sole purpose of women’s athletics. During the 1920s, however, officials at the three schools abandoned this popular arrangement in favor of a more traditional play day structure that adhered more closely with the Women’s Division standards. 8

Throughout the late 1920s and the 1930s representatives of these three colleges struggled to reconcile their different interpretations of what was acceptable for college sporting women; it was not always easy to make the Triangular Sports Days meet the demands of all three. For example, in 1927 Mills College officials and students designed a Play Day that began by assigning registered students to their “color group” (team) for the day, but by 1929 the Triangular Sports Day had shifted to a more formal organization along class lines. This transformation to more standard teams was not enough to satisfy
Stanford's delegation, as the minutes of the University of California's W.A.A. illustrate. They read, in part, "a letter from Stanford... indicates that they would like to change to intercollegiate competition. Mills apparently approves the present type of Play Day or something similar to it. Our own W.A.A. Council has expressed itself unqualifiedly in favor of the present plan or a similar plan and against intercollegiate competition."^9

This debate over the proper format of the Triangular Sports Day continued into the following spring without a lessening of tension. By the end of the spring term, Mills College had moved closer to the Stanford position against the purely interclass format of the play days, favoring instead some sort of arrangement that would allow women from the different institutions to represent their institutions instead of merely their class.

Louise S. Cobb, the faculty advisor to the California W.A.A. reported that her "group has defended the present type of Sports Day with positively religious fervor," and that the California women could not "bear the thought of any compromise that involves whole teams from one college competing against whole teams from another." Cobb concluded that "unless some such compromise is effected we will have to drop out of the Triangle," the most prominent and important event in the California women's athletic schedule.10

Clearly, the California contingent had found difficulty trying to preserve both their ideals and their institutions.

Over the next several years these three schools continued their Triangular Sports Days and their negotiations about what form these play days should have. In February 1931, the California W.A.A. agreed to "try the new scheme of full teams from each class in each college" and to "do [its] best to satisfy Stanford and Mills," but after hearing that the Women's C Society had mixed feelings about the proposal, the W.A.A. drafted
guidelines that the new T.S.D. must meet in order for California to participate. These special conditions set by the California W.A.A. made it very clear that California remained dedicated to promoting the program of the Women’s Division and its sister organizations. Through these conditions the California W.A.A. tried to insure mass participation by demanding that each institution send at least 80 women to the event and that each woman play in only two games. The W.A.A. also demanded that “as many games as possible be played at the same time, distributing interest,” and they added additional conditions designed to lessen the amount of notoriety a team or individuals could garner. They asked that no game’s score ever be made public and that no team hold “special practices in preparation for the Day.”

Once in operation the new Triangular Sports Day arrangement satisfied the California W.A.A., but the question of how far the schools could move on the intercollegiate competition continuum remained as an omnipresent issue. The Fall 1931 “Review of W.A.A.” report illustrates this very well with this description of a recent Triangular Sports Day at Stanford: “The principle of competition involved—whole team competition on an interclass but not intercollegiate basis—seems thoroughly satisfactory to Council. The question of further (i.e. more nearly intercollegiate competition) is to be decided by Council early next semester.” In October 1932, the W.A.A. agreed to participate in another Triangular Sports Day that would feature “interclass competition instead of intercollegiate competition” and that would stress that “idea of the day is not winning for winning’s sake but sociability and good play.”

By the fall of 1933, the regulations governing the Triangular Sports Days had changed once more, again moving toward more focused competition. Contrary to
California's earlier policies, the schools agreed to hold the T.S.D. later in the term so that Mills and Stanford could "organize teams and have sport practices." Over the next few terms, the schools added more sports to the T.S.D.s, and the women of the California W.A.A again altered their earlier position by voting for an "interclass intercollegiate" T.S.D., one with the scores announced. This time, it was the Mills delegation that refused to participate under this limited intercollegiate arrangement, so the T.S.D. remained the same, on an interclass not intercollegiate basis. 

After this decision, the T.S.D. remained on an interclass basis through the rest of the 1930s and through the mid-1940s; however, other aspects of the T.S.D. changed, revealing the continuing tension between the stated philosophy of the W.A.A. and the desires of the students for more competitive outlets. For example, the three schools continued to pack more sports into the Triangular Sports Days, and they also began complementing the original mass play days with more focused, sport specific events, inaugurating Triangular Basketball Days and Triangular Tennis Days by the 1935-36 school year. As the faculty advisor's report indicated, the students' "enthusiasm was very marked." The Triangular Sports Days also seemed to retain their popularity; the fall 1937 gathering at California attracted almost 200 athletes for the day. The attendees enjoyed both a full day and a new athlete matching system. The sports program included competitions in field hockey, archery, swimming (6 different categories), golf, fencing, tennis (singles and doubles), and diving. The matching system, proposed by the California W.A.A.'s president, required the ranking of athletes playing individual sports so that the "competition [would be] more interesting for those taking part." This new ranking system furthered the gradual move away from a strict implementation of the
"democratic" anti-competitive standards promoted by the physical education professional organizations by formally separating the highly skilled athletes from the less skilled in order to facilitate more competitive events. According to Dorris Berry, the general chairman of Triangular Sports Day of the University of California, this sporting day conducted with the new ranking system "was the most successful" to date.17

Throughout the late 1930s and early 1940s the opportunities for California women to test their athletic abilities against outsiders continued to multiply, as the numbers of individual Triangular Sports Days kept increasing while the university’s women also received numerous invitations to other events. Between 1938 and 1941, California women were able to compete in hockey, tennis, golf, archery, basketball, tennis, swimming, badminton, volleyball, riding, and riflery, either in T.S.D.s or in special events hosted by other universities. While many students must have appreciated the diversity of athletic offerings, some faculty members and students were concerned about the proliferation of events and the diffusion of local control. In March of 1940, the California Women’s Athletic Council expressed fear “that if many Triangular Sports Days were had the whole idea would be lost.”18

Educators at other institutions recognized the difficulties California experienced trying to marry beliefs and practices, and other institutions devised their own approaches to the problems. In 1930, Ohio State Instructor of physical education Helen Schleman argued in the Journal of Health and Physical Education that the California women, along with their counterparts at Stanford and Mills, had erred when they shied away from interclass intercollegiate competition. Schleman’s article carried the provocative title of “Experimental Play Days: Experimental Intercollegiate Competition for Women.” and it
explained how Ohio State was seeking to avoid the same mistakes in interpretation that had damaged the programs and the women at the three California schools and across the nation. According to Schleman, the women running the Triangular Sports Days had mistakenly associated interclass intercollegiate competition with the varsity athletic programs that the professional physical education associations opposed. Schleman argued pointedly that "as a matter of fact, of course, the two types of competition are neither the same nor similar, but the members of the [Athletic Conference of American College Women] who refused to see this point were presidents of college athletic associations from all over the country who had been taught arbitrarily that anything that sounded like interscholastic competition for girls was bad." Schleman assured her readers that it was not.

Schleman’s article explaining the “experimental play days” offered by Ohio State highlights the fact that, despite an overwhelming consensus about the proper types of women’s competition expressed in the official policies of national professional organizations, complete uniformity never existed in operation. The 1929 Ohio State play day that Schleman described sought to integrate the Women’s Division’s hopes for mass participation in a large number of sports with the interclass-intercollegiate arrangement that allowed for more practice, better skills, and greater competition. The Ohio State organizers also structured the Play Day so that it would maximize the social possibilities inherent in intercollegiate interactions. Several women’s organizations at Ohio State worked together to plan the day, and each woman from Ohio Wesleyan (the other participating school) received a personal invitation from her Ohio State host for a day. The participants also heard presentations from adult speakers invited to “[get] across
some fundamental ideas about cooperation as individuals and as campus organizations and something definite about sportsmanship."²⁰

The University of Michigan hosted a similar play day for 170 participants from four institutions in November 1929, one that also featured interclass intercollegiate competition and that produced the same desired "Social by-products." Pitting teams that had previously practiced together against each other produced "open and fairly fast" hockey games. Throughout the day, according to one correspondent, the women competed hard and fairly while managing to avoid "undue influence on winning or losing." The players seemed to enjoy the arrangement and managed to maintain a "happy, entirely 'crab-free' mood throughout" the day's events. In her account of the play day, the University of Michigan's Elizabeth Halsey recognized that the use of teams derived completely from one school, instead of teams combining players from all the schools, was controversial. Halsey reported that many high schools had discovered that real interscholastic competition could produce "a feeling of tense and even bitter rivalry which makes sportsmanlike conduct of games difficult if not impossible;" however, she also claimed that "the natural desire of the sport-loving girl is to play her best on a team which is working together with all its power against stiff competition." The problem facing policy-makers, then, was to reconcile the desire to promote sportsmanship and other positive virtues with the "natural desire" of athletic women to play their best against prepared and competent competition. Halsey concluded that this initial University of Michigan Play Day had successfully navigated between the poles of overemphasis and denial of competition, but even that success did not blind her and her colleagues to the pitfalls that lay ahead. Accordingly, she conceded that "whether further Play Days of the
same sort would eventually produce more organized competition, more emphasis on winning, and therefore less spontaneous good fellowship” remained “an open question.”

Throughout the rest of the 1930s, educators began to call this type of play day, one that allowed teams from one institution to practice beforehand and then compete on a designated day, “sports days” to differentiate them from the traditional play days. The University of Maryland’s women moved during the 1930s toward the “sports day” model while also increasing the emphasis given to their women’s intramural programs. During the 1933 homecoming weekend the Maryland W.A.A. sponsored a series of interclass games, entertaining spectators with the members’ athletic prowess. For the next year’s homecoming celebration, the women took the next logical step and invited hockey teams from nearby Marjorie Webster School for Girls and the American University for “closely contested games.” Significantly, this was not interclass-intercollegiate competition but instead was a contest between the Maryland women’s team and single teams representing the other schools. That same year, the Maryland yearbook reported that Maryland women participated in “the annual intercollegiate swimming meet” and that the Maryland women’s basketball team won its game against the American University squad. By the 1935 homecoming weekend, the women’s athletic contribution had expanded yet again, with teams from two additional universities competing. That day, the Maryland team won three hockey games and lost one to Western Maryland University. Later that same season, the University of Maryland hockey team participated in another hockey play day, this one sponsored by the Washington Field Hockey Association and including eight local colleges and universities. The yearbook proudly reported that the Maryland team earned a tie for first place in the
standings with its performance that day. These types of "play days" maintained their popularity in the Washington, D.C. area throughout the rest of the decade, with basketball also emerging as an intercollegiate sport, although one contested on an interclass basis.  

While the University of Maryland's hockey, swimming, and eventually basketball contests provide excellent examples of the proliferation of sports days and other variations of intercollegiate athletics, these teams still competed only on a single day not over an extended schedule: that was not the case for the University of Maryland's women's rifle team. Although Cahn discussed the 1920s emergence of popular riflery, hiking, and camping in terms of "noncompetitive recreational clubs," in fact many of the women's rifle clubs and teams defined themselves by their competitive records. With roots extending back into the 1920s, the University of Maryland women's rifle team often competed in more than twenty competitive matches a year, most sponsored by the National Rifle Association. In fact, based on the dozens of universities from across the nation that the University of Maryland competed against, it appears that rifle shooting was one of the most prominent sports open to college women during the 1930s. While most of these competitions were conducted on a "telegraph" basis, several were not, permitting the women from one university to stand shoulder to shoulder, competing with their rivals from other institutions.

As the numbers of participating institutions indicate, shooting sports offered welcome opportunities to college women wanting to distinguish themselves athletically, and the events often attracted significant publicity to the female athletes. Again, the University of Maryland provides one of the best examples of sustained public adulation of collegiate female athletes. Throughout the 1930s, the pages of the Maryland yearbook...
heap praise on the teams and individuals that brought national championships back to College Park. In 1930, for example, the yearbook recognized the “remarkable” shooting of Alice Orton, who won the “Women’s Individual Intercollegiate Rifle Championship,” becoming the third consecutive individual champion from Maryland. The next year’s yearbook hailed “a banner year for the Women’s Rifle team!” one that saw the team win the National Team Championship match in a National Rifle Association event. According to the article’s author, this was Maryland’s first “Women’s Intercollegiate Rifle Championship” since 1926.*

The Maryland women continued their successful shooting streaks during the following years. In 1931-32 the rifle team defended their national title successfully, aided in part by Irene Knox’s shooting perfectly from all three shooting positions, a “feat unparalleled” in the N.R.A.’s history and unequalled in men’s intercollegiate history as well. The next year, Knox slipped all the way to second in the individual intercollegiate championship. Over the next several years, the University of Maryland women’s rifle team continued to win the vast majority of its matches and to feature individual sharpshooters who placed in the national individual standings, but the squad did not win another national championship during the decade’s remaining years.*
Figure 5.1. The 1934 University of Maryland Rifle Team

Figure 5.2. The 1935 University of Maryland Rifle Team
The attention given to the individuals and the teams for winning championships would have unnerved the physical educators most committed to the concept of playing for play's sake. Judging from the many pictures of the confident women holding rifles that adorned the pages of the Maryland yearbook, the women certainly enjoyed their shooting, but the articles about their activities stress winning percentages over fellowship, individual and team championships over social lessons. Moreover, the Maryland shooters also earned more official recognition for their accomplishments, receiving varsity letters for their participation and prowess. Finally, even though they usually avoided the pitfalls of extensive travel by using telegraph meets, the women won these championships and competed against other universities' teams with a man as a coach. Although their pictures always reveal the shooters to be well-dressed, usually in dresses covered by shooting jackets, the rifle team at Maryland successfully managed to flaunt many of the other restrictions on female athletes endorsed by the professional organizations of the day.

The University of California's female shooters also competed both nationally and locally during the 1930s. In fact, California appeared on four of the five printed schedules of the University of Maryland's rifle team during the decade, while at other times California women participated in matches against Drexel University, the University of Washington, Louisiana State University, and the University of Kansas. The W.A.A. also occasionally organized Saturday morning "pleasure shooting" sessions for women, in addition to including riflery in the high school sports days it hosted. In the late 1930s, the W.A.A. approved a "riflery play day" with San Francisco State College with the understanding that the competition could be interclass, but not intercollegiate, and in

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1940 the W.A.A. split hairs, sanctioning another meet with San Francisco Junior College as long as individuals shot only for themselves and not for their schools.\(^\text{28}\)

Although these pleasure shooting sessions and competitions were among women, not all of the California women’s shooting was sex-segregated. In fact, in December of 1935, the W.A.A. rifle team challenged the men’s R.O.T.C. team to a meet. Only a few months later, and perhaps as a direct result of this competition, a California student, Betty Sutton, requested the opportunity to try out for the university’s varsity riflery team. The W.A.A., the female physical education staff, and the men’s coach all supported Sutton’s petition, but they also set strict guidelines on female participation on the men’s team. These rules included provisions that the W.A.A. handle all health eligibility matters, that all females’ practices and matches shooting occur during W.A.A. hours at the range, that women could practice only two hours a week without special permission from the director of women’s physical education, that women must meet predetermined high standards shooting while standing up, in addition to the three traditional shooting positions to even try out for the team, and that “all matches [were] to be telegraphic or by letter.”\(^\text{29}\)

Although the relevant female and male university officials agreed to grant Sutton’s request and allow women to try out for places on the men’s varsity team, their action did not represent a complete break from the orthodoxy that continued to govern women’s college athletics. In fact, their guidelines served to insure that the consensus standards, though breached in one respect, would prevail in all others. According to their rules, women could compete with men’s team only if women physical educators continued to have control over the athletes’ health and as long as the shooters never
traveled and never shot with the men present. As it turned out, the codification of strict regulations was unnecessary, and those wishing to prevent the inclusion of women of the men's team actually got their way in Berkeley. In the end, according to Cobb, the requirement that women demonstrate proficiency shooting from a standing position disqualified all who tried out for the team.30

At Ohio State another female student petitioned for membership on the men's varsity team, and although the final result was the same—she did not get on the team—the process followed a different path. In 1940, OSU physical educator Gladys Palmer wrote to Ohio State's Athletic Director Lynn St. John on behalf of Ohio State sophomore Helen Jenkins. Jenkins was an excellent target shooter whose "life ambition," according to Palmer, was to make the All-American rifle team. Unfortunately for Jenkins, selection to this honorary team was contingent on inclusion on a school's varsity team. Palmer argued that Jenkins "undoubtedly . . . would have no difficulty in qualifying for the team from the point of view of skill in the activity," but her argument based on merit did not sway the men on O.S.U.'s Athletic Board. The board denied Jenkins admission to the team despite the coach's and "the boys'" professed willingness to accept her.31

Palmer told O.S.U. athletic director Lynn St. John that Jenkins deserved a straight answer from the university's Athletic Board about why she was not allowed to shoot with the men. Palmer recognized that having women compete directly against men was "incompatible with the best thinking of the profession and the public," so she forwarded Jenkins's question of whether a women's varsity team might solve the problem. The "twenty-two enthusiastic members" of the recently established Women's Rifle Club might have provided enough members to make such a team viable, Palmer reasoned.
Jenkins was, after all, but one of the “ever increasing number of highly skilled sportswomen found in colleges today” that wanted and needed opportunities to hone and use their skills. By the late 1930s and early 1940s, Palmer and her OSU colleagues were becoming increasingly determined to provide those opportunities, even if Jenkins never got hers.

Ohio State physical educators were pioneers in the pursuit of more competitive athletic opportunities for female college students for several reasons. The confluence of specific individuals, ideas, and opportunities helped lead Gladys Palmer, Mary Yost, Dorothy Sumption, and others to reopen the public debate about the proper competitive limits for college women. The existence of national trends favoring increased participation by women in public life and leadership encouraged their initiatives, as did a shared, more youthful and open outlook than that of most of their colleagues. More importantly, the recognition that the debate over the propriety of competition for college women was never as closed as the official pronouncements suggested and the belief that women could maintain control over more competitive activities, combined with the knowledge that many students desired more opportunities and that their men’s athletic leaders would support their efforts helped transform the OSU ideas into action.

First, the Ohio State women were a part of a new generation maturing professionally in an era that offered more visible role models of female leadership in public life. Working more than a decade after the 19th Amendment granted American women the right to vote, these innovators sought to open new doors for the next generation of women leaders. Following the lead of Eleanor Roosevelt and the first
female cabinet member, Francis Perkins, female educators often distinguished themselves through their political involvement and their leadership abilities.33

In 1938, Blanche Trilling, the University of Wisconsin’s Director of Women’s Physical Education and one of the nation’s most prominent physical educators, spoke about the importance of continuing advances and leadership by American women.

Trilling said, “in the last twenty-five years women have won the battle for freedom in all phases of community life, and with the changes in their status have come many new adjustments.” She argued that women “must add to their ever-present domestic responsibilities civic and community interests which have now become a right and a duty.”34 Because Trilling was addressing a meeting of university women, she was actually preaching to the choir, women who already were active leaders in public life. For example, Adele Stamp, the Dean of Women at the University of Maryland during the 1930s nurtured close friendships with Maryland governor Albert Ritchie, worked in numerous service organizations, including the League of Nations Association and the Prince Georges County Federation of Women’s Clubs, and had the gumption to challenge J. Edgar Hoover about the accuracy of the F.B.I.’s list of radicals.35 Similarly, Anna Hiss of the University of Texas helped create state-wide athletic associations, worked with municipal leaders to initiate a city recreation program, and eventually served on the Austin Foreign Policy Association, chairing the Latin American subcommittee. Almost by definition, the women who earned and managed to maintain their positions within the academy had great ability and strong personalities. That said, not all of them were willing to lead their profession in the direction that the Ohio State contingent wanted to go.36
Although Gladys Palmer's name was the only one officially attached to the article suggesting that proper women could compete, her Ohio State colleagues shared her convictions and willingness to work for changes in women's intercollegiate athletics. Moreover, Ohio State officials, including Mary Yost and Dorothy Sumption, believed that they spoke for an entire generation of female physical educators who wanted more opportunities for skilled women athletes. In her study of Ohio State women's athletics from 1885 to 1975, Mary Daniels argued that the early death of OSU chairman of the Women's Physical Education Division, Lydia Clark Benedict, in 1933, allowed Palmer to take charge as "a younger replacement long before other schools were in a position" to hire someone new. Two years earlier, the University of Arizona's Ina Gittings had also exposed a generational divide. Gittings had reported that she had "repeatedly heard the younger generation of pupils and instructors exclaim, 'But why can't we have varsity games?'". Gittings asserted that "it does not appear very well for the present arguments of the opposers [of competition] that the young do not even think it worth while to enter a serious discussion, but only ask for the 'joker' meanwhile reserving their convictions for the day when they can act." At Ohio State, that day came earlier than at most other universities. In an essay composed ten years after Gittings', an Ohio State physical educator recognized the situation, noting, "the young women in the field would be glad to tackle the problem [of intercollegiate competition]. However, they are bound hand and foot by their directors. They don't dare express opinions of their own. Many, too, have been so indoctrinated that they either can't think or are confined in their thinking."

Even under Benedict, the Ohio State women's physical education staff was not timid about expressing their opposition to the Women's Division and, by implication, its
standards. In a staff meeting in the early 1930s, Benedict asked for a motion authorizing
the department to send in the $10.00 membership fee to the N.A.A.F., but not one of the
twelve staff members would make the motion. Jeanette Stein remembered that the
opposition was not based on finances, but instead on principles. As Stein recalled, one
colleague put it bluntly, "we don’t approve of belonging to that organization, and we
don’t want to send our membership fee." Benedict recognized that she would "take a
beating" professionally, but in the face of a unanimous staff, she had no other option but
to comply with their wishes.40

If the Ohio State staff took courage from their shared resolve, they also found
inspiration in the fact that several women outside of Columbus periodically demonstrated
their willingness to rethink the limits on competition. While dominant among white
college officials, the Women’s Division’s view was never without challenges, both in
practice and in print, among their ranks either. In 1931, Gittings addressed the entire
litany of expressed concerns about competition. She argued in the Journal of Health and
Physical Education that professionally trained college instructors should be able to
moderate the negative effects of women’s athletics and that these fearful educators should
graciously accept "the inevitable—the return of intercollegiate competition for women."

Using a tactic that Ohio State officials would later employ, Gittings tried to placate
doubters by arguing that the Women’s Division and other concerned physical educators
had done such a fine job promoting their ideals and beliefs over the previous eight years
that reviving women’s intercollegiate competition could safely occur as long as women
controlled the programs. In fact, Gittings argued that reinstituting varsity athletic
programs would “violate” only the travel prohibition of the Women’s Division platform.
Properly supervised varsity athletics, her argument held, would help college women gain confidence, skills, exhilaration, and vigor while also teaching them to control their passions for winning. Varsity teams could be “laboratories” for the desired “lofty social virtues” athletic programs should create.42

Gittings argued that the profession’s reliance on play days was misguided for at least two of reasons. First, although they allowed travel and social bonding, play days were not effective tools for a physical education program because they were too fleeting, were “extremely weak,” and offered “little or none of the joy and values of real games played skillfully, willingly, intelligently, and eagerly by well-matched teams.” Second, the concept of playing only for “play’s sake” made as much sense to Gittings as did eating “food for food’s sake” or creating “work for work’s sake.” She held that unless the events actually taught the participants something, they were worthless. However, Gittings did believe that play days, despite their inanity, would eventually engender something beneficial: a return to varsity competition for women. She predicted that play days would “evolve into actual varsity competition or die from ennui,” visualizing the “girls in a Play Day as sheep, huddled and bleating in their little Play meadow, whereas they should be young mustangs exultantly racing together across vast prairies.”3

Gittings concluded her essay with a condemnation of those educators who would postpone the unavoidable return of varsity athletics, hiding behind fears of male control and of the women’s programs following the path that men’s intercollegiate athletics had blazed. She scolded her colleagues, “there is nothing wrong with the games, competition, the girls, or travel, but there is something wrong with the directors, who have phobias at the thought of making the same mistakes in intercollegiates as men have made.” There
was also something wrong, in Gittings's mind, with the physical educators who did not trust themselves to control properly the inevitable redevelopment of intercollegiate athletics for women.44

Most of Gittings' colleagues did not share her faith in this inevitability, nor were they swayed by her attempts to address their concerns. In fact, although they did not "wish to take up cudgels against Miss Gittings' viewpoint," two authors felt compelled to rebut Gittings' arguments in the *Journal of Health and Physical Education*’s next issue. Grace B. Daviess, an assistant professor of physical education at the University of Cincinnati, believed that Gittings's utopian vision of varsity sport would never materialize in reality. In its place, a return to varsity women's athletics would result in a revival of the undemocratic privileging of the minority over the majority, of the few elite athletes over the rest of college women.45 The field secretary of the Women's Division of the N.A.A.F., Anne Hoddgkins responded directly to the question Gittings had posed with her article's title, "Why Cramp Competition?" Hodgkins bluntly replied that it was "varsity teams [that] actually do cramp competition by giving only a handful of girls an opportunity to enjoy the zest and exhilaration of competition."46 She claimed that all of the benefits that Gittings said women could derive from varsity competition were available in the play days, events "designed to provide the best of varsity competition" to all college women, not to create the bleating sheep that Gittings described. Like Daviess, she argued that varsity competition was undemocratic, exclaiming "at last, in this great democracy, we are beginning to realize what democratic education is" and that to focus on the few elite athletes would be to fall "out of step with present trends." Moreover, both Daviess and Hodgkins agreed that the college athletic programs had to remain
consistently conscious of the message that their actions sent to those outside the ivory tower, particularly to American high schools. Although almost all colleges had adopted the Women’s Division standards and abolished varsity competition, many high schools had not yet, and to send a signal reinforcing the continuation of undemocratic programs was unconscionable to these educators.47

Throughout the decade the professional press and other media outlets also carried the message across the country and definitely to Columbus that at least a few educators continued to question or circumvent the official stances against highly organized, elite competition for women. In April of 1930, University of California alumnae and world renowned tennis star Helen Jacobs issued a call for intercollegiate women’s tennis tournaments, writing that “it is a fallacy to regard competition for women in the light of it being a detriment to the sport” and that competition was the “only thing that [would] raise women’s tennis in the colleges to the heights that it deserves.”48 According to Jacobs, most women had to develop their competitive urges, and college tournaments would provide the ideal laboratory for that development. Like men, women would raise the level of their play if they were playing for something tangible, and women could overcome their inhibitions about entering public tournaments if they had a reason to play, for the pride of their school. Jacobs identified a 1929 Boston tournament as the “first Women’s Intercollegiate Tournament,” and she regretted that more people did not note or support “one of the most progressive steps in the game.” She hoped that a college would eventually take a principled stand and support women’s intercollegiate tennis equally as much as colleges supported men’s tennis; after all, according to Jacobs, the women would develop many of the same qualities through competition as the men.
This explicit appeal to make women's tennis more like the men's, and by extension the women themselves more competitive like the men, was unlikely to sway physical educators afraid of that very occurrence.49

While there is no evidence to suggest that the Ohio State educators read the University of California alumni magazine, enough articles appeared in the professional press to guarantee that they kept abreast of the simmering debate about the propriety of competition and the proper role of university physical educators. Besides the "Cramping Competition" exchange of the early 1930s, other relevant articles occasionally appeared in print. For example, the Journal of Health and Physical Education published an article, complete with several pictures, about the 1937 National Archery Meet. According to the article's author (and the tournament's fourth-place finisher) the most notable aspect of the women's competition was that women who had been physical education majors in college earned the top four spots; moreover, all of these four had continued their professional development as high school physical educators. Clearly, these physical educators would have known about the professional strictures against high-level competition for young women in high schools and colleges, but they all felt comfortable enough to compete on their own in a national tournament for individual honors and great publicity. During that same academic year, the University of California competed in 25 intercollegiate telegraphic archery meets. The Ohio State leaders saw hypocrisy in this dissonance between officially ideology and personal actions.50

This incongruity between stated ideals and actual practice was most notable in regards to the sport of field hockey, or just plain "hockey." As Cahn argued, "the case of field hockey indicates that it was not competition per se that triggered reformers' anger.
but rather breaches of professional control and cultural sensibility.\textsuperscript{51} Cahn and others have advanced this argument because many professional physical educators supported high level hockey competition for themselves and often for their college students, often echoing male athletic enthusiasts in their praise for the sport’s vigorous competition and require physical rigor. They could do so because field hockey was never considered a “male” sport, and because it was dominated by females, its participants were never in danger of becoming “mannish” or of having males control their activities. The differentiation of hockey also revealed social class prejudices. Most hockey players tended to be relatively well off financially, and by celebrating the virtues of hockey and condemning industrial league basketball and baseball leagues, educators maintained clear boundaries between themselves and their working-class counterparts.\textsuperscript{52}

Historian Joan Huit has argued that hockey provided college women intercollegiate athletic opportunities during the 1920s and 1930s, although the teams usually were officially club teams, not varsity. For example, Huit identified an intercollegiate hockey tournament held in Virginia in 1930 as a “typical” event. The University of California’s hockey experiences during the late 1920s and the 1930s corroborate Hult’s larger point that many college women skirted the prohibitions against high-level competition by playing the one sport in which educators usually allowed it. After boasting of a competitive field hockey team in the early 1920s, California de-emphasized its women’s team in accordance with the standards of the professional physical education organizations. By 1929, however, the W.A.A. was again sponsoring games pitting a California team against a traveling All-American hockey team and against the Bay Counties Athletic Association. The next year, the W.A.A.’s members
and advisors considered joining the United States Field Hockey Association, an organization that had hundreds of members, that featured a large bureaucratic organization, and that hosted a national tournament. While opposing all efforts to move the Triangular Sports Day toward intercollegiate competition, the University's women's athletic leaders endorsed field hockey games against traveling teams not associated with universities. Clearly, a double standard existed.53

This double standard became more explicit within a year, when Louise Cobb promoted a particular organization to her W.A.A. advisees. Cobb "explained that the Northern California Hockey Association was organized for women college graduates, and that any women graduates may play if they are not at the same time playing with a college group."54 With this one statement, Cobb recognized both the validity of college groups playing competitive field hockey and that of an athletic organization that excluded all women, however interested or talented, who did not have the seemingly unrelated means or ability to graduate from college. Throughout the rest of the decade, California teams continued to represent the university in competition against Stanford, Mills, and other sundry all-star teams and local athletic organizations; never in the minutes of the W.A.A. does an objection to hockey competition appear.55 An objection to the double standard would materialize, instead, in the Ohio State proposals for change.

In November 1938, Ohio State's Gladys Palmer published her provocative "Policies in Women's Athletics," the initial salvo in what became a civil war among physical educators. In this brief essay Palmer first voiced publicly the questions and proposals that would raise so much controversy over the next few years, culminating in a
plan for a Women's N.C.A.A. (W.N.C.A.A.) and hosting of the first intercollegiate golf
tournament for women. The fact that the proposals she offered on behalf of herself and
her Ohio State colleagues immediately raised clouds of controversy should not obscure
the fact that Palmer and like-minded educators shared many of the same philosophies and
beliefs with the establishment groups and individuals who felt they were under attack.
Palmer and her colleagues agreed that unlimited competition was dangerous. The Ohio
State educators shared the fears of their professional organizations that if men controlled
women's athletics they would corrupt and commercialize sports and athletes, ruining
them just as they had the men's programs. Palmer's proposed plan expressly denounced
the formation of permanent leagues in which teams competed for championships as men
did. Finally, Palmer stated that she desired that, "women who participate in sports
[should be able] to do so without losing any of their natural feminine charm," whatever
form the competition took.56 Thus, not all aspects of Palmer's and her colleagues'
proposals were radical; the upstarts actually shared most of the assumptions that the
orthodoxy upheld.

Despite listing these consensus views, Palmer's essay publicly expressed the
highly controversial notion that middle-class college women could be highly competitive
and also appropriately feminine. The proposed diversions from the beaten path, though
few, were significant. Encouraged by the belief that the profession had already made
almost everyone aware of proper values connected to women's athletics, strengthened by
the understanding that other professionals believed as they did and by the realization that
many colleges and universities were already participating in intercollegiate and other
extra-institutional competitions, inspired by the perceived desires of undergraduate

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women for increased opportunities, motivated by the belief that elite women athletes deserved the right to test their abilities against other elite athletes, and surrounded by male athletic leaders singing the praises of competition, Ohio State’s female physical educators dared to challenge their profession’s hard stance against all intercollegiate competition for women. By arguing for limited and female-controlled forms of intercollegiate competition, Palmer nonetheless challenged the most fundamental of her profession’s tenets, the one against elite competition for college women.

Using a wise, and probably even sincere tactic, O.S.U. officials argued that they felt free to propose changes only because the professional organizations had thoroughly warned all educators about the pitfalls of unregulated competition. By suggesting that the anti-elite, egalitarian message had successfully permeated all levels of college athletics, the Ohio State contingent could then argue that the time for the next developmental stage had come. Only with the safety and protection of women athletes insured, the Ohio State educators agreed, could officials consider the expansion of opportunities. Palmer claimed that in spite of the virtual unanimity expressed in public pronouncements, her profession lacked a true consensus on the value of competition for women. Daring to highlight deviance, Palmer demonstrated through numerous examples that intercollegiate competitions and tournaments already existed despite the best intentions and practices the profession’s leaders. Highlighting grassroots pressure for opportunities for women, Palmer focused on the “incredible development of interest” of the “literally millions of our young women” who wanted to play organized sports and games. The problem, according to Palmer, was that the very women who had trained and studied how to organize and oversee women’s athletics prohibited themselves from doing so outside
college campuses, leaving untrained and potentially unscrupulous people, most of them men, to operate the expanding number of public leagues and tournaments.

Time passed after the publication of "Policies," and Palmer and her colleagues watched and waited. Even after two years of waiting in vain for organizational responses to her 1938 article, Palmer and her colleagues remained careful not to couch their next call for action in terms of open rebellion. In 1940 Dorothy Sumption, an Ohio State associate professor of physical education for women, advanced a argument similar to Palmer's in her book, *Sports for Women*. Sumption argued that "competition for college students outside school walls is needed to parallel competitive attractions in sports offered to women in local, state, sectional, national, and international meets and tournaments," and she concluded her chapter on intercollegiate competition with the controversial and confrontational assertion that "intercollegiate competition for women is definitely here to stay."58

As she had written in 1938, Palmer similarly wanted her professional colleagues to face reality and accept that "it is impossible to legislate out of an individual the instinctive urge to compete—'competition is the very soul of athletics.' It is possible to guide effectively organizations for the promotion of sports toward the sound administration of women's competition."59 Palmer was explicitly challenging the notion that competitiveness drove only men, arguing that, if controlled, it could also be a proper feminine quality. By sanctioning and claiming dominion over limited competition, Palmer agreed with Texas's Anna Hiss who had argued that female physical educators would be able to dramatically increase their influence in the outside world, perhaps curbing some of the dangerous excesses there as well.60

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Much like proponents of anticompetitive, anti-intercollegiate sports, O.S.U.’s women’s athletic officials also wanted to offer equal opportunities to all female college athletes. However, the two groups understood “equality of opportunity” differently. Whereas spokeswomen for the professional organizations argued that equality was achieved by offering all women exactly the same facilities and the same level and amount of instruction, Ohio State leaders contended that equality occurred only when all students had the same chances to play games with other athletes of their own skill level. According to this argument, most students would be able to find within their institutions plenty of fellow students who shared their talents. However, rare elite athletic ability would necessitate that those possessing it look to other colleges and universities for the opportunity to test their skills against true peers. Based on interviews with many of Palmer’s Ohio State colleagues and coworkers, Daniels concluded that Palmer’s assertions in the “policies” article reflected the philosophy of a united group dedicated to providing opportunities for elite athletes as well as the less athletic women.61

The women’s physical educators at Ohio State moved in the early 1940s to put their ideas into action. In a document entitled, “Concerning Competition,” the “faculty members of the Department of Physical Education for Women at The Ohio State University” argued that “members of college and university faculties [could] create a pattern for women’s intercollegiate sports competition which [would] place sports in their true relationship to other activities and which [would] make our physical education programs richer and broader.”62 The OSU physical educators wanted to create a W.N.C.A.A. structured like the men’s N.C.A.A., to oversee this bold new step in women’s athletics. However, because it included only female physical educators, the
OSU letter reasoned, there would be no danger that the W.N.C.A.A. would come to stand for the same values, or lack thereof, that the men’s N.C.A.A. did. As envisioned by the Ohio State crowd, the W.N.C.A.A. would oppose selling tickets to any women’s intercollegiate activity, “any procedures which tend toward the exploitation of the individual for the enjoyment of spectators or for the athletic reputation of the college,” all instruction that made students believe that in competition they defended the reputation of their coaches or their school, “any practices which over-emphasize the making or breaking of records or the winning of championships,” any differentiation between amateur and professional women’s athletes, and any violation of a very strict set of health guidelines.63

Palmer, writing for the O.S.U. staff, hoped that “such an organization would move rather slowly in developing this phase of the program but that it would move,” and she wanted Ohio State to demonstrate its leadership potential by hosting an openly conducted, national intercollegiate golf tournament for women.64 Ohio State female physical educators proposed the Women’s NCAA and the women’s intercollegiate golf tournament in 1941 with the firm belief that they had many legitimate reasons for doing so and the support of many female colleagues and male Ohio State officials. They needed only the endorsement of their governing professional organizations to inaugurate a program of expanded athletic opportunities for middle-class, white college women and to open new leadership opportunities for the credentialed professional educators in industrial and extracollegiate recreation leagues. That endorsement did not come in 1941. As Smith has argued, the W.N.C.A.A. was not radical in its stated values or goals,
only in its proposed existence, but when coupled with the Ohio State golf tournament that was enough to scuttle the W.N.C.A.A. before it ever got started.

Ohio State’s female athletic officials wanted to demonstrate that properly supervised, elite competition could provide the same benefits as lower-level events while at the same time sating the appetites of highly skilled collegiate athletes within the protective confines of college and universities themselves. By spring 1941, OSU’s disappointed leaders had resigned themselves to the fact that their professional colleagues were not willing to take this organizational step. In fact, most physical educators were not willing even to endorse the idea of a national golf tournament as an individual event, much less the institutionalization of its underlying goals. The hostility of the profession’s establishment to their plans shocked Palmer and her colleagues, especially when they experienced it firsthand at two professional meetings in early 1941.

Ohio State physical educators announced their plans for the golf tournament in March, mailing “Concerning Competition” along with an official “Invitation to College Women Who Play Golf,” which contained statements of support from Ohio State’s president, athletic director, and dean of women. Mailed to more than 300 colleges and universities and intended to operate with the support of the physical education establishment, this invitation required potential participants to secure the signature of their schools’ head of physical education for women. Much like the planners’ optimism, this provision would later fall.

Despite the efforts of Palmer, Yost, and others to make the tournament as unobjectionable as possible, they did not succeed; the idea of dozens of middle-class white women playing tournament golf while under constant supervision was simply too
radical for the majority of their colleagues. Choosing a sport associated with upper-class leisure did not placate their opponents, nor did the requirement that all participants wear nice dresses when competing. The tea hosted by the university president and his wife might have smoothed a few ruffled feathers, but the "mixed swim" and dance with arranged escorts probably raised other concerns. Simply put, the OSU organizers could not obscure the fact that they were promoting a national tournament for college women, enticing them to travel from all around the nation, encouraging them to compete, and then recognizing the best with trophies.68

The first troubling indication that establishment organizations would not support Ohio State's planned tournament came during the meeting of the Midwest Association of College Teachers of Physical Education for Women, held in Huntington, West Virginia, in early April 1941. The Ohio State delegation presented their plans for a national tournament and argued for the creation of the W.N.C.A.A. Palmer received a telegram from the delegates that nicely captured the reception of their ideas, especially the reaction of an older generation: "Bombshell exploded. Shrapnel flew wildly. Old guard resented that group was not consulted first as organization to consider movement."69 After this ominous response, and summoned by a telegrammed invitation, Palmer decided to attend the National Association of Directors of Physical Education for College Women in Atlantic City, New Jersey, later that month.70

The Atlantic City trip was no more pleasurable for Palmer and her support system than Huntington had been for Ohio State's other representatives. In fact, in 1975, Yost still recalled her visit to Atlantic City as "a very traumatic experience."71 In 1966, at a banquet commemorating the 25th anniversary of the inaugural tournament, Yost outlined
how the Ohio State delegation had been “very severely criticized by many of [their] professional colleagues.” The criticism was both personal and painful. Yost recalled that “friends of many years stopped speaking to us. We were accused of being publicity seekers.”

The acrimony went both ways in Atlantic City. In a Saturday morning meeting, the Ohio State ideas were denounced as “untimely,” and a committee decided to “squash [them] as this is a publicity stunt.” At one Sunday morning meeting, the chair instructed Palmer to remain seated; meanwhile Yost and another OSU representative were “first ignored, then jumped on.” Finally, during the Monday evening meeting, the conference passed several disparaging resolutions, including some against national tournaments, and others opposing any organization that “might tend to increase the numbers of competitive events for women.” The attendees called for yet another committee discussion of competition for women sometime in the future. Frustrated by the complete and official dismissal of their ideas, and also by the fact that numerous people endorsed privately, but not publicly, some form of intercollegiate competition for women, Yost labeled one opponent a “louse” and another delegate a “jellyfish” for refusing to take a firm stand either way.

Vertebrates themselves, the Ohio State women’s physical education staff vowed to press on and organize the golf tournament with or without the support of their profession’s majority. The majority noticed. During April, May, and June 1941, the Ohio State staff received numerous letters either congratulating them on their courageous stand or cautioning them about the Pandora’s box of dangers they were threatening to open. One educator revealed to Palmer that she had “always been and [was] now in
accordance with your own views concerning competition.” Several others sent Palmer letters of support, with many expressing real regret that they could not afford to send golfers to the tournament. Some correspondents described their own experiences with intercollegiate competition. A representative of the Jackson College for Women, Tufts College, informed Yost that her school had “intercollegiate competition [there] with a few other colleges within a small radius. I believe that it can be controlled so that the evils which have been claimed for it are nil. We have found it to be stimulating, helpful, and fun.”

The Ohio State tournament proposal also received a very public endorsement from New York Herald Tribune columnist Janet Owen. Referring to the Atlantic City meeting of the National Association of Directors of Physical Education, Owen wrote that “this august body, matriarch of girls’ sports on the college level boxed the ears of a plan” that the reporter commended. Owen agreed that, in the past, the existence of women’s varsity athletics had reduced the number and quality of athletic opportunities available to less skilled women. However, she asserted, “in the last decade, the set-up changed into a sort of Communism wherein the skilled and unskilled were all given equal attention and training.” The association’s stated “democratic” goals of a “game for every girl, and a girl in every game,” seemed practically socialistic to this columnist, a label of extreme significance in the era of the Dies Committee and fervent anti-communism. According to Owen, the Ohio State plan giving athletes the chance to excel and match their skills at the highest level was a step in the proper “democratic direction.”

In many ways the debate over how much competition to allow was also a debate over what constituted “democratic” collegiate athletic programs. While most male
athletic leaders used intercollegiate athletics as a “democratic” bulwark against socialism and radicalism, most female athletic leaders embraced in the name of democracy the very egalitarian system that the men loathed. While it is easy to see the extremes of both sides as representative, that creates a somewhat false dichotomy. As the Ohio State women were prodding their colleagues toward a version of “democratic” sport that allowed a greater accommodation of elite athletes’ desire to compete against each other, many male athletic leaders were arguing for an increased emphasis in men’s college athletics programs on mass participation as a way to spread democratic values. 

Judging from their correspondence, the Ohio State officials had failed to convince their professional counterparts that the tournament plans were not as threatening or dangerous as the women feared, and the small number of entry forms that had arrived as the May 31 deadline approached indicated that the OSU educators might have stirred up controversy and sacrificed personal relationships for nothing. However, by altering the registration process and allowing interested athletes to register without the signature of their disapproving professors, OSU solicited enough entries to make the tournament viable. Eventually 38 golfers representing 21 colleges and universities signed up for the first intercollegiate golf tournament for women.

The old guard, however, did not let the tournament proceed without voicing their dissent and giving their standard reasons for disapproval. While some suggested that a gathering of elite athletes without a tournament, and thus without winners, losers, and championships on the line, would be acceptable, the OSU format was not. Others offered the traditional argument that the trail Ohio State was blazing would lead to diminished opportunities for most collegiate women, would commercialize women’s sports, and
would put the emphasis exactly where it did not belong. This improper emphasis was on, according to Iowa State physical educator, Elizabeth Halsey, “determine[ing] winners and mak[ing] money.” Halsey compiled for Palmer a long list of Iowa State’s objections to the plan, including one based on a notion of democracy that would have seemed alien to O.S.U.’s male athletic officials, much less the female leaders. Again connecting athletic policy with national politics, she informed Palmer that “democracy can adapt to rapidly changing economic and social conditions. It must, however, move away from the cutthroat competition and unregulated individualism and toward acceptance of disciplined self-regulation and cooperative planning.” Athletics, in Halsey’s mind, should contribute to this shift, and Ohio State was not doing its part.79

The major organizations sent representatives to monitor the tournament, look for ethical improprieties, and report on everything that happened in Columbus. Yost remembered years later that “for a while it looked as thought there were more faculty membes from other schools coming to investigate us than there were contestants.”80 Despite the overwhelming agreement on most issues between the OSU educators and their professional organizations and despite the efforts of Palmer, Yost, Sumption, and others to make the tournament as unobjectionable as possible, these investigators saw much to concern them. The presence and endorsement of the men’s athletic director at the opening ceremony surely gave the disapproving observers in attendance serious pause, as must have his statement, “I think that far too often our women do not have the benefits of keen competition in a sport of this kind.”81 The efforts of Ohio State’s publicity director to attract media attention to the tournament and to the individual golfers certainly alarmed the observers. The use of a professional golfer, Patty Berg, as a referee
and as the host of a golf clinic, also increased concerns among many in the crowd.

Finally, having a representative of the NCAA—the very organization most women physical educators felt had helped create commercialized, corrupt, and elitist athletic policies for men—speak to assembled golfers and audience at the opening banquet must have reassured the tournament’s opponents that their stance was correct. His hope that “some day this tournament will develop into a tournament similar to the [men’s] held here last week” neatly articulated the precise fears many physical educators felt about this experiment.²²

So, with the support of the Ohio State female leaders, the school’s student body and men’s athletics staff, and many outsiders, and with the inquiring eyes of the establishment’s representatives scrutinizing every move and function, the golfers teed off. The athletes proved that college women could play at an extremely high level, with the winner posting a 75 on the same course that college men had used to determine their national champion a week earlier. Despite almost unanimous professional strictures and Ohio State’s own departmental policies against presenting awards to winners, the champions all received trophies or medals because the organizers “couldn’t quite see [them]selves having a national tournament without following the custom of tournament awards.” Yost later explained that the tournament organizers tried to negate the elite status associated with trophies by giving medals to almost every participant and by including on the medals the innocuous words, “Those who strive for merit shall attain success.” To those skeptical about the tournament, the presentation of awards was just more evidence that it celebrated and promoted the wrong values for proper American women.³³
Not everyone left Columbus with a negative view of the tournament and its organizers; the college golfers clearly relished the experience. In fact, one athlete claimed that she should have "managed to flunk something this year at Michigan State" to have another year of college so she could compete again the following year. Despite enduring months of criticism and vocal challenges, the O.S.U. organizers remained committed to her ideas, especially after seeing them in action. Encouraged by the success of the tournament and the enthusiasm of the golfers, Palmer made a final pitch for the Women's N.C.A.A., announced the date of the next year's tournament, and boldly proclaimed that the "only thing that would interfere with the [tournament] date would be should our country be at war."84

Of course the one roadblock that Palmer could envision materialized, with World War II doing what determined organizations of physical educators could not do—stop Ohio State from hosting a national intercollegiate golf tournament for women. The next tournament would not occur until 1946, again at Ohio State and again under the leadership of Palmer and Yost. The annual tournament remained at Ohio State until 1953, after which it traveled to all parts of the country. In 1966. Yost could look back with pride and recall, "The organization that we proposed in 1941 has come into being slowly. In 1956 three of our professional organizations . . . appointed members to a committee to 'draft plans for the continuation of the National Collegiate Golf Tournament for Women.'" This meeting led to the creation of a National Joint Committee on Extramural Sports for College Women and then to another organization that would insure that the tournament continued.85
The year 1956 witnessed the wide acceptance of the ideas most female physical educators had rejected 16 years earlier. Between 1941 and 1956, women’s recreational softball and baseball leagues had gained enormous popularity, epitomized by the All-American Girls Softball (later “Baseball”) League’s success during its existence from 1943 to 1954. This league also illustrated that the age-old questions about the possibility for feminine competition did not end with the athletes in nice dresses at the OSU golf tournament. Professional baseball players had to attend finishing school before playing and avoid “masculine” dress and hair styles, all to reinforce the belief that a league publication spelled out: “The more feminine the appearance of the performer, the more dramatic the performance.”*86 Not coincidentally, another professional athletic organization, created in 1946 as the Women’s Professional Golf Association, by 1950 had changed its name to the Ladies Professional Golf Association, incorporating code language for class and femininity into its new and permanent title.97

It was not until the 1960s, in response to the growing women’s movement and the urge to keep up with the Soviets, that the number of women’s intercollegiate opportunities really began to increase. As Hult has pointed out, arguments over women’s intercollegiate sports after the 1940s were not over whether elite athletes should have the opportunity to compete but over what kind of competition was preferable.88 In short, the belief that it was possible to preserve femininity while promoting elite athletic skill through controlled competition that Palmer, Yost, Sumption, and others had articulated in the late 1930s and early 1940s—the core ideas that they had based their tournament around—had become orthodoxy by the mid-1950s.
The highly controversial and widely discussed inaugural national intercollegiate golf tournament for women was the first major step toward more equal collegiate athletic opportunities for men and women. The Ohio State organizers of the 1941 tournament were not radicals; in fact, they shared many more points of agreement with their professional colleagues than they did points of disagreement. Professors Palmer, Yost, Sumption, and the other Ohio State physical educators would not have celebrated the rise of a women’s jock culture, just as they would probably have opposed the current commercialization and wide press coverage of women’s college sports. They would have, however, applauded the fact that talented women now get a chance to test their athletic abilities against talented women from other institutions without sanction or censure.

1 The National Association of College Women, founded by Mary Church Terrell in 1910, condemned intercollegiate athletics in 1929 because of “all their undesirable physiological and sociological features.” Quoted in Rita Liberti, “‘We Were Ladies, We Just Played Basketball Like Boys’: African American Womanhood and Competitive Basketball at Bennett College, 1928-1942,” Journal of Sport History 26 (1999): 575.

2 Cahn, Coming on Strong, 69-70, quotations on 70. Liberti, “We Were Ladies,” 567-568.

3 Liberti, “We Were Ladies,” 576.

4 Cahn, Coming on Strong, 70. For a larger discussion of how African-American colleges and universities viewed men’s athletics as a forum through which they might “engage white society in a broad-based dialogue about democratic principles and practices,” see Patrick B. Miller. “To ‘Bring the Race along Rapidly’: Sport, Student Culture, and Educational Mission at Historically Black Colleges during the Interwar Years,” History of Education Quarterly 35 (1995): 111.


7 Ethel M. Bowers, “Play Days and Festivals,” a section of a larger article entitled, “News of Girls’ and Women’s Athletics, Conducted by the Women’s Athletic Section, American Physical Education Association, and the Women’s Division, N.A.A.F.,” American Physical Education Review 34 (October 1929): 472.
8 Kubow, “Once Upon a Time There was this Stick,” 2-4; Figone, “A History of Women’s Crew at the University of California,” 5-6; Schleman, “Experimental Play Days,” 8.


11 W.A.A. Minutes, 24 February 1931, 126; 10 March 1931, 128; 17 March 1931, 129-130, (W.A.A. Minute Book, vol. 3, CU-283), Women’s Athletic Association Records, 1921-1972, BL, UCB. First quotation is from 24 February meeting, the guideline quotations are from the 17 March meeting.


13 W.A.A. Minutes, 12 September 1932, volume 3, 227.

14 W.A.A. Minutes, 30 October 1934, volume 4, 30; W.A.A. Minutes, 13 November 1934, volume 4, 37.


18 For a description of the plans for the 1938 T.S.D., see “Minutes of the Triangular Conference, April 23, 1938.” (Triangle Sports Day,” CU-283:5), Women’s Athletic Association Records, 1921-1972, BL, UCB. To see Victorville University’s invitation to an “intercollegiate Riding meet,” see W.A.A. Minutes, volume 4, 28 March 1939. To read about an invitation from San Francisco State College to an Rillery PlayDay, see Louise S. Cobb, “W.A.A. Council Notes, March 4, 1939.” (“W.A.A. Advisor’s Reports, Fall 1935-Spring 1940,” CU-283:7), Women’s Athletic Association Records, 1921-1972, BL, UCB. To read the discussion about the dangers of having too many T.S.D.s, see W.A.A. Minutes, volume 4, 5 March 1940, 251.

19 To see that Schleman was an instructor in the Ohio State Department of Physical Education for Women, see Record of Proceedings of the Board of Trustees of the Ohio State University July 1, 1929 to June 30, 1930 (Columbus), 190. For Schleman’s argument, see Helen Schleman, “Experimental Play Days: Experimental Intercollegiate Competition for Women.” Journal of Health and Physical Education 1 (February 1930): 8.

20 Schleman, “Experimental Play Days,” 8-10, quotation is on page 10.

Cahn, Coming on Strong, 66; The Reveille 34 (1934): 204; The Terrapin (1936): 173.

The Terrapin (1936): 190 and 191; The Terrapin (1940): 148.

Cahn, Coming on Strong, 57; The Reveille 29 (1930): 218. Page 215 of this same edition recognizes rifle as "Maryland's only intercollegiate sport." In the 1932-33 academic year, the University of Maryland women's rifle team won 25 out of 27 matches. They competed against teams from all across the country. A partial listing of their opponents includes the University of California at Los Angeles, the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Wichita, South Dakota State, The University of Missouri, Columbia University, Northwestern University, Louisiana State College, the University of Georgia, the University of Michigan, Cornell University, the University of Vermont, Washington University, and Cornell University. For a complete listing, see the "Women's Rifle Team" section in The Reveille 32 (1933). While it appears obvious that the women's team did not travel for matches against these scattered teams, the yearbooks do not often refer to the matches as "telegraphic meets." Exceptions to this rule appear in the 1935 and 1936 editions. See The Terrapin (1935): 117, and The Terrapin (1936): 193. For information on the rarer, and therefore more noteworthy, face-to-face competition with George Washington University and Beaver College, see the "Maryland Women in Sports" section in The Terrapin (1941).


The Reveille 31 (1932): 204; "Women's Rifle Team Section" in The Reveille 32 (1933).

The Terrapin (1937): 167. This page identifies the members of the team who won varsity letters and the freshmen who earned numerals. It also explains that "the success of the team may be attributed to the patient and expert instruction of Sergeant George J. Uhrinak." This was Uhrinak's first year, but his predecessors had also been male.


Cobb, "Notes From W.A.A. Council, February 4, 1936."

Gladys E. Palmer to L. W. St. John, 1 November 1940, 1, ("Women's National Collegiate Athletic Association: 1940-41, 1949," 9/e-5a/8), Acc. 84/94, Women's Athletics, TOSUA.

Palmer to St. John, November 1, 1940, 2.

Evans, Born for Liberty, 206-208. Evans discusses the importance to American women of a "closely linked network of women in the New Deal." These women were important not just for what they did but also for what they symbolized to American women and other "people on the margins" of society. Quotation is on 207.


26 “Notes on Interview With Anna Hiss,” 4-5, (“Notes on Interview With Anna Hiss,” 3R246), University of Texas Physical Training for Women Records, CAH, UTA. For example, neither Hiss nor Stamp spoke out in favor of the O.S.U. plan for a W.N.C.A.A. and an intercollegiate golf tournament.

27 Mary Daniels, “The Historical Transition of Women’s Sports at The Ohio State University, 1885-1975 and its Impact on the National Women’s Intercollegiate Setting During That Period” (Ph.D. diss., The Ohio State University, 1977), 92-107. quotation on 125.


29 Daniels, “The Historical Transition of Women’s Sports at The Ohio State University,” 136: “The Future” section of “Girls Athletics.”

30 Daniels, “The Historical Transition of Women’s Sports at the Ohio State University,” 124.

31 Gittings “Why Cramp Competition?” 54.


34 Gittings, “Why Cramp Competition?” 54. As mentioned in chapter four, the Y.M.C.A./Y.W.C.A. interaction of the 1920s demonstrates that this fear of creeping male organizational dominance was not paranoia. See Vandenberg-Daves, “The Manly Pursuit of a Partnership Between the Sexes.”


37 Hodgkins, “In Answer to ‘Why Cramp Competition?’” 29. Iowa high school basketball provides perhaps the best example of the continuation of high-level competition throughout the 1920s and the 1930s. After the Iowa High School Athletic Association decided in 1925 that it was improper for girls to play in tournaments before paying audiences and cancelled the annual state tournament, another organization, the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union, started hosting popular annual county, region, and state tournaments that continued well past the 1930s. See Janice A. Beran, “Iowa, the Longtime ‘Hot Bed’ of Girls Basketball,” in *A Century of Women’s Basketball*, 182-186.

49 Jacobs, "Women's Tennis," 27, 46. Quotations are on 27.


51 Cahn, Coming on Strong, 97.


54 W.A.A. Minutes, 8 September 1941, 144, (W.A.A. Minute Book, vol. 3, CU-283), Women's Athletic Association Records, 1921-1972, BL, UCB.

55 For examples of other times the California W.A.A. discussed hockey events, see W.A.A. Minutes for the 13 November 1934 (vol. 4, page 36) and 5 November 1935 (vol.4, page 73) meetings. See also the "Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting," 26 September 1938, (2:7, CU-282), University of California, Berkeley, Associated Students Records, BL, UCB.


58 Sumption, Sports for Women, 72 and 97.


60 University of Texas director of women's physical education Anna Hiss had made a similar argument in early 1937 in her article, "Girls' Basketball Leagues: What about them—and Our Responsibilities?" Hiss called for trained physical educators to get involved in municipal and industrial leagues, assisting those outside the academy coordinate and operate their tournaments by the correct standards. Hiss wrote, "damage has been done by the conscientious objectors who are unwilling to get in and work with the 'questionable' groups. Would it not be wise to grasp every opportunity that comes our way, or even to seek opportunities of affiliation which would enable us to assist in these tournaments? Eventually we may be able to give something of real value to the leagues." See Anna Hiss, "Girls' Basketball Leagues: What About Them—and Our Responsibilities?" Journal of Health and Physical Education 8 (February 1937): 104.

61 Daniels, "The Historical Transition of Women's Sports at The Ohio State University." 136.

62 Gladys Palmer, "Concerning Competition." 1, ("Physical Education: Golf: Intercollegiate Tournament (Women): 1941-1942," RG 9/e-1/17), Director of Athletics, TOSUA.

63 Palmer, "Concerning Competition." 3.
Writing in Spring 1941, the Ohio State author of "Girls Athletics" assessed the possibility of forming the W.N.C.A.A. this way: "I personally don’t think we will be able to form an organization. I think that confusion and bad practices will increase until the time will come when we can laugh and say, ‘We told you so.’ But that is an empty satisfaction when you are honestly trying to do a job that you know needs to be done. Any suggestion will be appreciated." See “The Future” section of "Girls Athletics."

"Concerning Competition;" Smith, "Women’s Control of American College Sport," 110.


Daniels, "The Historical Transition of Women’s Sports at The Ohio State University," 144: TDorothy [Sumption] and Tony [Violet Boynton] to Gladys Palmer, 2 April 1941, ("Competition: Issues Concerning: 1941, 1951," 9/e-5a/8), Acc. 84/94, Women’s Athletics, TOSUA. Punctuation and capitalization mine.

Daniels, "The Historical Transition of Women’s Sports at The Ohio State University, 145;" Ruth H. Atwell to Gladys Palmer, 24 April 1941, ("Tournament Correspondence: 1941," 9/3-15/1/18), Women’s Golf, TOSUA.

Daniels, "The Historical Transition of Women’s Sports at The Ohio State University, 145;" Daniels interviewed Yost in January, 1975.

Both quotations come from “Yost Speech,” 5.

All information and quotations are from “Yost’s Notes,” ("College Director’s Convention: 1941," 9/e-5a/8), Acc. 84/94, Women’s Athletics, TOSUA. Ronald Smith refers to these pages as Gladys Palmer’s “Diary. April 26-29.” I disagree with this attribution for several reasons. First, the pages refer to Palmer as “Miss Palmer” and to Yost as “Yost.” In fact, the author refers to only Palmer as a “Miss.” It seems doubtful that an author would reserve a title only for herself in an informal journal of a conference. Secondly, in the section describing the Sunday afternoon meeting the author wrote, “Watson and Yost to tea where we were first ignored, then jumped on.” The use of “we” implies that the author was either Yost or Geneva Watson. Later in the text, however, the author noted that “I don’t think Geneva convinced her.” Finally, in her dissertation, Mary Daniels consulted the same notes and interviewed Mary Yost extensively, presumably discussing the notes with her, and Daniels refers to the papers as the “personal notes of Mary Yost.” See Daniels, “The Historical Transition of Women’s Sports at the Ohio State University," 147.

The article notes that the paper was first presented at the April 1938 convention. See Palmer, “Policies in Women’s Athletics.” All letters are from The Ohio State University Archives. See Evelyn Bielefeld to Gladys Palmer, 24 April 1941, and Ruth Links to Mary Yost, 13 May 1941, ("Tournament: Correspondence: 1941," 9/e-15/1/18), Women’s Golf.

Owen was not new to debates about women’s college athletics. In 1936 she had published an article entitled, “Publicity—Your Right Hand Man,” in the Journal of Health and Physical Education. See Journal of Health and Physical Education 7 (October 1936): 481-484, 520-522.

American socialism and communism during the 1930s, as well as of the fears of these groups see Ellen Schrecker, Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1998).

77 For more on this topic, see chapter three. Also, see again Yost, “The Place of Varsity Athletics in a Program of Athletics for All;” Sanders, “Builders of Character of Teachers of Activities?”; Stoddard, “The Relation of Physical Education to the Purposes of Democracy”; Oberteuffer, “Physical Education and the Democratic Ideal”; Hughes, “The Role of Intercollegiate Athletics in National Preparedness.” Scott, “The Ramparts We Watch.”

78 Daniels, “The Historical Transition of Women’s Sports at The Ohio State University,” 148-149, quotation on 149. For a complete listing of schools represented see Daniels, 149-150. To view the entry forms themselves, see the folder “Tournament (1st): 1941; (2nd) 1946“ in 9/e-15/1/4, Women’s Golf. TOSUA. Based on remarks and introductions from the opening banquet, the actual number of participants seems to have been 30. The photograph of the 1941 contestants included in the 1946 entry form, however, included 30 golfers with one not included.

79 For examples of these letters see Katherine W. Montgomery to Gladys Palmer, (“Tournament: Correspondence: 1941.” 9/e-15/118), Women’s Golf, TOSUA; Elizabeth Halsey to Gladys Palmer, May 1, 1941, (“Competition: Issues Concerning: 1941. 1951,” 9/e-5a/8), Women’s Athletics. Halsey was the University of Michigan author of an earlier cited article about Play Days.

80 “Yost Speech.” 5. For examples of correspondence regarding the disapproving observers coming to Columbus see Ruth H. Atwell to Gladys Palmer, June 20, 1941 and June 27, 1941, (“Tournament Correspondence: 1941.” 9/e-15/118), Women’s Golf. Atwell was the “jellyfish” from the Atlantic City convention and was also the Chairman of the National Section on Women’s Athletics of the American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation. Also see the letter copied to Palmer from Elizabeth Kelley, president of the National Association of Directors of Teachers of Physical Education for College Women, to Helen Hazeltine, June 29, 1941, (“Tournament (1st): 1941; (2nd) 1946,” 9/e-15/1/4). Women’s Golf.

81 “Remarks Made Before the Tournament”, 5, (“Physical Education: Golf: Intercollegiate Tournament (Women): 1941-1942.” 9/e-1/17), Director of Athletics, TOSUA.

82 “Yost Speech,” 6, 2, and 8; “First Women’s Intercollegiate Golf Tournament held at The Ohio State University Golf Course, June 30 to July 3, 1941,” 9, (“Intercollegiate Golf Tournament: 1941.” 9/e-5a/8), Women’s Athletics, TOSUA.

83 Information and quotations from “Yost Speech.” 6.

84 For comments from participants on the event, see pages 4-5 of “Meeting held at the Ohio State University Golf Course. Thursday, July 3, 1941, 2:00 P.M.” Palmer’s thoughts appear on 5-6, with the quotation from page 6. See (“Physical Education: Golf: Intercollegiate Tournament (Women): 1941-1942.” 9/e-1/17), Director of Athletics, TOSUA.

85 “Yost Speech.” 9.

86 Rader, American Sports. 220-221. quote on 220.

87 Rader, American Sports, 287.


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"It is a fact agreed to by all, that there is no more concrete manner in which the interest of the student and ex-student of the University of Texas can be bound to the institution than by the interest engendered by its intercollegiate teams."

H. J. Ettlinger, University of Texas, 1929

"Why does the California or Stanford alumnus, even in a remote corner of the world though he may be, forego his comfortable slippers and warm fireside to attend a banquet whenever Big Game time rolls around? . . . He is seeking something more, seeking to recapture some of the spirit of undergraduate days, to feel once more the influence of university life, which unifies greater numbers of men and women, more permanently, than any other factor in American life." The California Monthly, November 1931.

"And football is not played for the benefit of school boys. It is for the alumni, the stadium fund, good will between Tennessee and California governors who have dates with movie stars, coaches who are gray-eyed men of destiny, receipts at the gate, receipts at the ticket office of the railroads and airlines." Editorial, 1939.

"While I think the present football profits should satisfy the semi-commercialized conditions which exist at California, I do not believe it economically advantageous, and
certainly not a strategic move, to eliminate football broadcasting in the vain hope of more shekels thereby at the turnstiles." D. M. B., a California alumnus, March 1935.

During the tough times of the 1930s, Americans sought community and common bonds, searching for elements and experiences that united them while economic, social, and political currents threatened to divide the nation. They often found these ties through participation in a consumer culture that increasingly influenced most aspects of American life. As Warren Susman put it, the 1930s witnessed a "determined struggle for the attainment of the identity of an American Way of Life, a definition of culture in America and for Americans with an increased emphasis on strengthening basic cultural institutions seriously threatened by newer cultural forms . . . and the profound experiences of depression and war."¹ By the late 1920s, intercollegiate athletics had become one of these sacred cultural institutions worthy of protection, and university officials worked in concert with students, alumni groups, public officials, and the general population to preserve its standing. Their strategy of using athletics as a means to create communities of interest in and concern for their universities largely succeeded. Through the practice of commercializing and commodifying college athletics the universities not only protected and preserved intercollegiate athletics' place in American cultural and social life, but they also helped insure the institutional survival of the public universities themselves.

Despite numerous areas of disagreement, throughout the 1930s American college officials could agree on at least one essential point: alumni groups and the taxpaying public paid more attention to universities' athletic teams than to their academic programs. Some lamented the fact; others accepted and tried to take advantage of it, but none denied
it. This interest among the general population was not coincidental, nor was it entirely
detrimental; in fact, in many ways it worked to the advantage of the universities. They
had at least one product that consumers remained interested in consuming throughout the
1930s. During that decade, university officials, state leaders, alumni groups, and
ordinary citizens all used intercollegiate athletic programs and the ideals the athletes
represented to create and strengthen bonds, both real and imagined, between American
public universities and their various vital constituencies.

University athletic programs created tangible links between the institutions and
their alumni groups in two important ways. First, the universities legitimized and
codified alumni interest in men’s athletics by providing alumni representation on athletic
governing committees and by listening closely to alumni concerns about the success and
direction of intercollegiate teams. Secondly, by coordinating alumni events with sporting
events, especially “homecoming” or “big” football games,” the universities officially
linked returning to one’s alma mater, either in body or in spirit, with athletics. Doing
this, American university leaders consciously employed athletic events to reinvigorate
alumni’s school spirit and restore their affinity for their alma maters, all during a decade
when the universities needed their interest and support most urgently.

Equally as importantly, intercollegiate athletic programs, and football in
particular, helped the universities forge vital links with citizens who had not attended
their classes but whose support and good will was essential to the public universities’
continued survival. Despite the desires of reformers, American universities continued the
commercialization of college sports, offering for consumption not only an entertainment
product but also membership in a community of athletic supporters. This community
creation process was bilateral, with the universities publicizing and promoting their athletic teams and the general public and alumni groups consistently demanding more information about and access to the teams. Relatively homogeneous official alumni groups, complete with membership rosters and game-day gatherings, constituted one form of interested community, while groups as diverse as “citizens,” “tax-payers,” or “Californians” also interested and involved themselves in university affairs through their vicarious participation in athletic programs. By hoping that “we” would win victories on the athletic fields, these communities strengthened their ties to the public universities.

The decade of the 1930s was a time of real and perceived crisis for intercollegiate athletics, with financial and ideological challenges seemingly threatening the continued existence of this formidable American institution. Like most basic American institutions, however, this one survived the Depression, modified but even stronger than before. The important use of athletics to bind different communities to the university insulated intercollegiate athletics from the financial dangers that threatened the programs during the early 1930s, and the increased use of radio broadcasts and other media to strengthen these bonds insured that American intercollegiate athletic programs would continue along their path of creeping commercialism, not abandon it.

Benedict Anderson’s concept of “imagined communities” helps illuminate the process through which American universities linked themselves with their various constituencies. Anderson used this term to explain the formation of nationalist sentiments, not collegiate affiliations, but the notion of imagined communities also helps explain these later connections. Nationalism, Anderson posited, is a cultural form, not an
ideology; it is more of a body of feelings and beliefs, sentiments and ideas than anything else. He explained, "it would . . . make things easier if one treated [nationalism] as if it belonged with 'kinship' and 'religion,' rather than with 'liberalism' or 'fascism.'"

Similarly, college football fans seemingly have always rooted their passions and allegiances in personal connections with individuals, groups, or the institutions the universities purport to represent (Catholicism, all Tennesseans), not on an ideological or even intellectual basis. In this way, then, the "imagined community" model applies nicely to this study of personal athletic affiliations.

Anderson defined a nation as "an imagined political community. . . imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign." The relationships among the members of the nation, are imagined because all of the members will never be able to know each other personally; in fact, most will likely never even see each other much less develop close relationships. The same applies to university supporters, especially during the 1920s and 1930s when an emerging era of radio broadcasts allowed fans to hear the games isolated in their own living rooms instead of as part of a crowd in packed stadium. Additionally, the national community is limited, in Anderson's formulation, because even if nations contain millions of members, outsiders always exist, in the form of other nations and rivals. Again, this also applies to university communities, particularly those formed around the athletic teams. Thousands of Ohioans could listen to the Ohio State football games on the radio, but the community of "Ohioans," by definition, could easily identify their opponents' fans as outsiders with opposing interests, especially if that opponent was the University of Michigan.
The communities of university and athletic supporters generally also conceived of themselves as superior to their rivals, if not necessarily “sovereign” as Anderson wrote about national communities. During the 1930s, seemingly every American university saw inequities and misbehavior in its rivals’ actions, but only rarely did one identify serious misconduct in its own operations. Moreover, members of alumni groups and university publicity agents never tired of discussing either the unsurpassed athletic heritage of their own institution or the unparalleled athletic facilities of their campus. Finally, Anderson’s definition of a nation applies to this discussion of university communities precisely because the various university constituencies understood themselves as real communities. Anderson argued “the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship,” as a large “fraternity” able to inspire great loyalty.

During the Depression large public universities dealt with at least two, often overlapping, groups that matched this description: the body of people who had attended the university (the alumni) and the body of citizens and taxpayers who financed the university and whose state the university’s teams represented.4

In his analysis of the growth of nationalism, Anderson focused on the importance of language and mass communication, especially what he called “print capitalism,” and the shared notion of a literally timeless community. By the 1600s, moveable print enabled the rapid diffusion of ideas through the machinery of capitalists, allowing people to share ideas and beliefs much more easily than they could before and helping fuel the Protestant Reformation and the growth of various national and administrative vernacular languages. The availability of mass media similarly fostered the creation of the university communities that revolved around athletics; for when newspapers, alumni
publications, and radio broadcasts focused the public's attention on the athletic components of universities, the media helped create and reinforce the message that this was the most important product the universities produced. Nationalism also involves a sense of timeliness, as if national communities had always existed. Just as American nationalists in the 1930s could refer to how "we" won the American Revolution, a twenty-five year old athletic enthusiast of the same time could salute "our" decades of success on the football field. The supporters of college athletic teams during the 1930s imagined themselves to be part of a community, and they drew strength from their sense of belonging. In turn, these communities' interest and enthusiasm greatly strengthened the universities as well, helping to insure the survival of the athletic programs and, in some cases, the schools themselves.5

Seeking to protect their institutions, during the 1930s university officials sought to demonstrate their relevance to their host states and communities in a variety of ways that did not involve athletics; in various ways they tried to prove that their essential nature or "character" mattered.6 Increasingly, university leaders conformed to the norms of the burgeoning consumer culture, trying to "sell" the state university to the state's population by depicting it as a commodity, new, improved, and useful to all. As the institutions negotiated their way through the funding crises of the era, they continuously advertised their utility to the general population. One way in which they did this was to prepare a detailed catalog of all the ways the universities' programs and people contributed to the state's prosperity and welfare, such as it existed. For example, in 1936, the president of Ohio State presented his annual report to the governor, opening with the argument "that
probably there is no single citizen of Ohio who does not benefit indirectly from the explicit services of the University to the people and communities in every section of the state.” Sixty pages later, the report concluded, none too subtly, with President Rightmire’s argument, “It is impossible . . . to think of the Ohio State University as ‘above, beyond, and separate’ from the daily life of all kinds and classes of men, women and children, or all citizens and taxpayers of Ohio.” Between the forceful introduction and conclusion lay a detailed documentation of every university department’s contributions to the state. Rightmire declared that even the history department, despite “not render[ing] so conspicuously the type of public services which the more practical and scientific departments, such as Chemistry or Engineering can perform” was vital to Ohio and its citizens.  

Countless other universities duplicated this utility-based tactic across the nation. Throughout the 1930s the University of Maryland’s leaders followed a similar strategy, preparing documents that would demonstrate the fiscal and other types of value the university added to the state. The compilers believed that these documents would “be for the benefit of the Governor, members of the Legislature, editors and others who are likely to discuss the University of Maryland and its relation to the state” and that it would be a “valuable contribution to the welfare of the university as a whole, and therefore to each branch of the institution.”

In a climate that required pragmatism and measurable results, most universities sought to defend their operations on practical grounds, but the response of the University of California’s leaders indicates that some leaders of public higher education still felt comfortable discussing the less practical, and they would argue, more vital products of
academic life. President Sproul reported in December 1932 that more than one million
Californians benefited directly from the University of California’s classroom and
extension services, making it clear that the University of California “serve[d] the youth of
the entire State.” All service, however, was not direct or quantifiable. Sproul maintained
that “there must be research and ‘useless research’ if there is to be progress,” and that
“any attempt to shackle [faculty members] with bureaucratic rules and regulations, or to
force upon them studies assumed to be of practical value, would result in the destruction
of the University as a seat of higher learning.” However, after making the case for
“useless research,” Sproul explained how abstract research in political science,
gineering, science, economic, household management, and other areas did, in fact,
contribute to advances that benefited ordinary Californians. Though the decade,
while the particulars changed, Sproul always contended that the public university must
continue to attempt to address all of the state’s and nation’s major public concerns.

If the 1920s witnessed a declining emphasis on the importance given to personal
character, the same period also saw a concurrent and related increase in the importance of
who one knew and how people or institutions presented themselves, their “personality.”
Throughout the 1930s, public universities’ administrators also made calculated efforts to
strengthen their schools’ positions by creating closer institutional and personal
relationships with state government officials and members of the general population. In
1929, an Ohio State University supporter had financed visits to the Universities of
Michigan and Illinois by important government officials and university officials. This
excursion, and its resulting increased legislative awareness of Ohio State’s existing
operations and the support given to its counterparts, led directly to increased
appropriations. Similarly, cultivating personal relationships with governors and leading legislators helped Harry Byrd climb the University of Maryland’s administrative ladder and then to protect his university from budgetary devastation during the 1930s. Under Byrd’s tenure the University of Maryland continued to try to accommodate the general public, requiring teachers and staffers to make time for visitors whenever they were on campus.\textsuperscript{12}

Likewise, in 1938, the University of California appropriated $2,500 for an “educational fund” to fund trips by small groups of state legislators to campus where they could meet personally with student leaders and learn more about the “problems and interests of the student body and the University.”\textsuperscript{13} Public university leaders were willing to do almost anything to attract the interest of the public and its elected officials, and virtually all of them realized that arguments based on the character and quality of their academic programs or personal contact would not be enough to protect the universities and their interests. Therefore, these universities used athletics extensively during the 1930s to market positive images of themselves to outsiders and to create communities of interested and sympathetic observers.

As university leaders tried to build communal support for their institutions and their actions, they always relied upon both rational arguments and emotional appeals. These leaders emphasized the practical applications of the university’s work and also its outreach efforts. In particular, university officials stressed the fact that the universities directly benefited and educated many more people than the relative few that attended their classes. For example, of the 1,099,000 people that U.C. president Sproul claimed
his institution had helped in 1931-32, almost 820,000 interacted with the university through agricultural extension services. This pattern was duplicated across the country, and during an era when most Americans did not have access to a college education, the extension efforts of universities generated a great deal of public good will. In order to understand the significance of college athletics to the creation of college-centered communities, one must first recognize that college athletics operated in many ways as an extension service, bringing the university, its people, its passion, and all that these things came to symbolize to the public that the university existed to serve.\(^\text{14}\)

American educators had long recognized that intercollegiate athletics served as the single best extension arm of the university, as a division able to attract interest and inspire loyalty far better than its corresponding academic departments. With their youth, vitality, vigor, enthusiasm, physical prowess, and optimism, athletes often constituted the most attractive and appealing public face of the universities, serving as perfect advertisements for beleaguered institutions. In 1920, in a call for donations for athletic facilities construction, the president of the University of Maryland wrote that “athletics is the strongest tie by which to bind Alumni, Students, and Faculty into a single unity for furthering building up the institution.”\(^\text{15}\) While, this sentiment was neither novel nor widely challenged by the 1920s, many educators still did not like the reality it revealed.

When compiling *American College Athletics* during the late 1920s Savage recognized the wide appeal that college athletics had developed, writing that their “financial and public aspects, the reputation which they confer upon the institution, and a thousand other forces have united to make them not so much activities of undergraduate life as joint cooperative enterprises involving presidents, trustees, faculties, alumni, and
Many other reports and editorials argued precisely the same point: that intercollegiate athletic programs, particularly football, were indeed "joint cooperative enterprises," dependant upon the support and enthusiasm of a wide range of interested groups for their financial and competitive successes, in this way serving as a microcosm of the universities that the athletes represented.

During the late 1920s and the 1930s, American public university leaders consciously cultivated and took advantage of this diverse array of interested groups to build a larger, university-based support community with a strong interest in athletics, a community composed of public officials, university alumni, and the general population. One telling example from the University of Tennessee student newspaper reveals how effectively athletics could be in selling a university and an image to its constituencies and in fostering institutional, state, and even national good-will toward a university. The columnist presented many reasons for the University of Tennessee to do everything in its power to keep football coach Robert Neyland at the school, deftly combining the rhetoric of commercialism and community within one argument:

"Through his amazing leadership on the gridiron, Tennessee has become nationally known as a great and progressive institution. He has brought it more national advertising than half a dozen new buildings, the addition of a score of competent professors, and the constant plugging of ten thousand uninspired students could ever have brought.

He has done more to sell Tennessee to the country than any other individual connected with the university in any manner.

He has done more to see Tennessee to Tennesseans than any other Tennessean, native or 'furriner.'
He has brought more pride to Tennessee's students than all the material development it can amass in ten years of consistent advancement. And why?
Because: Football today is the great outlet of collegiate emotion; the great source of loyalty, inspiration, pride, and reverence.17

As they fought for public money, attention, and affection, university officials recognized that their athletic programs constituted some of the best weapons available to them in this struggle. Throughout the 1930s, university presidents and public relations officers worked diligently to get local, state, and sometimes even national leaders to attend their games, trying to use athletics to secure these officials' interest and loyalty. In 1930, the A.S.U.C.'s manager of athletics encouraged California's president to send tickets to "influential friend[s] of the University" whenever he thought it could help the school, and the University of California indeed made it policy during the 1930s to provide football season passes to all levels of state government officials, including assessors, state senators, and members of executive committees.18 On the other coast, in 1939, one alumnus encouraged University of Maryland officials to persuade the governor to attend a Maryland football game, working under the assumption that "the support of the University of Maryland by your State officials and the whole hearted support of other citizens of your State would be of primary importance in increasing the attendance at the University of Maryland games." Because of its unique location, the University of Maryland did not cater only to state officials; instead, its athletic director sought to attract the national spotlight by cordially inviting President and Mrs. Roosevelt, and their friends, to attend the 1936 Maryland-Georgetown game in College Park.19
This ploy of using football to influence public officials' sentiments and to link the cultivated interest to universities' levels of public funding sometimes worked too well.

Across the nation, when the public universities succeeded in attracting the interest of state political leaders, trouble often followed. For example, after the Pacific Coast Conference passed a rule limiting the number of games conference teams could play against non-conference teams, the University of California football teams from Berkeley and Los Angeles could no longer play as many local rivals as they had before, including the College of the Pacific, Santa Clara University, and St. Mary's University. State legislators, believing that this rule would reduce the revenue potential and the number of entertainment opportunities in their home areas, favored retaliation. Their explicit threats prompted a letter from a San Francisco city official to U.C.B. president Sproul, warning of a "possible attack on your budget in the Legislature." The author wanted to "forewarn" Sproul of the possibility, writing that this "in my opinion is a 'hell of a way' to mix football and university budgets." Other public university officials learned during the 1930s that increased interest from legislators, while necessary for funding purposes could be undesirable in other respects.

If public universities could not afford to offend their states' political power brokers, they also could not afford to alienate the one segment of the population that had already developed emotional ties to the campus, the alumni. In some ways, the masses of university alumni did not compose an imagined community but an actual one. A fair percentage of alumni probably had met each other during a shared college class or during a common alumni gathering, and, therefore, many shared a genuine sense of communal ties. Most, however, did not; instead they acted as citizens in the University of...
Tennessee, Texas, or Nebraska nation, complete with sentiments of superiority and patriotism but with those emotions sparked by their alma mater instead of their nation. Recognizing this, universities intentionally utilized athletics as a tool to construct and maintain this most vital imagined community structure. They did so in a variety of ways. These universities used "homecoming" games, athletics-centered alumni gatherings and publications, and formal alumni representation on athletic boards to recognize the importance of the alumni to the university and to regenerate their interest in each other and in the fate of their alma maters.

Former university students could belong to officially recognized alumni communities as well as the more amorphous imagined communities. Most universities by the 1930s enjoyed the support of well-organized alumni associations, complete with official membership rosters, dues, and publications. These groups composed the official bodies of the alumni, and they spoke with that group's recognized voice. Even with these common characteristics, their size and strength varied widely. For example, in 1932, U.C. president Sproul boasted that the 20,000 members of the University of California Alumni Association made it the nation's largest and that The California Monthly was the most widely circulating alumni publication in the nation. That year more than 10,000 U.C. alumni gathered at more than 50 meetings "to renew their contract with the University." In contrast, the University of Maryland had only 413 paid alumni association members as late as 1941.21

Regardless of the size of these official alumni associations, they all employed athletics in a number of ways to maintain the alumni members' interest in and passion for their alma maters, working to create imagined communities of mutual interest. First, by
focusing much, and often most, of their attention on the athletic activities of their alma
mater, the alumni associations reinforced the idea that the alumni population should care
almost exclusively about the universities' athletic successes. During the 1930s, the
*Maryland Alumni News* often discussed the university's athletic teams on every page,
including feature stories, summaries of games, and numerous pictures of the athletes
representing the institution and the fans watching them do so. Almost all alumni
publications similarly emphasized athletics, if not on every page, then on a sizable
portion of them. For example, in the 1936-37 year, *The Ohio State University Monthly*
featured athletes on the cover of six out of ten editions, and the 1938-39 year included
covers depicting cheerleaders, champion swimmers, a javelin thrower, another
cheerleader with the Homecoming Queen, and two covers about an alumni days and class
reunions that featured athletics prominently in their activities. That year, only the
January cover focused on the educational mission of the university.22
Figure 6.1. Cover of *Maryland Alumni News*. October 1932.

Figure 6.2. The next month's *Maryland Alumni News* cover.
Some universities resisted catering to the public's and their alumni's preoccupation with intercollegiate athletics, but during the Depression these institutions eventually yielded to the demands for more information about the one topic always commanded the interest of outside observers: athletics. The University of California's experience with its alumni publication, *The California Monthly*, highlights the fact that even at elite universities, the drama and decisiveness of sports trumped all other topics in terms of interest. As mentioned earlier, the University of California's leaders and alumni regarded their institution as one of the nation's best and most comprehensive universities, and the pages of the *California Monthly* for the early 1930s reflected this educational emphasis. In 1933, the *California Monthly* editor politely explained to a disgruntled reader why the magazine did not publish more information about the university's sports team, pointing out that the magazine did publish numerous articles about athletics and that early deadlines prevented more detailed accounts of some events. Still, as the decade progressed, the amount of coverage increased. Catering to continued alumni interest in California athletics, the alumni editors published "seven weekly news sheets," complete with post-game interviews, analysis of the games, and "locker room chit-chat" during the 1937 football season. A dispute with the postal service about sending a "football weekly" under the imprint of a "monthly," caused the termination of this service to the alumni, but the editors assured their readers that the *Monthly* would continue to offer athletic coverage "unique among alumni publications of America in its timeliness of last-minute news."23

The California editors recognized what their counterparts across the nation, and their university president, had long known: athletics kept the alumni interested unlike any
other topic. According to his close friend, colleague, and biographer, president Sproul was very interested in intercollegiate athletics both personally and professionally. Pettitt wrote that "no alumnus was more interested in attending intercollegiate competitions than the President himself, and none could wave his arms more wildly or cheer more loudly." More importantly, Sproul acknowledged the utility of athletics in piquing the interest of the alumni. Again, according to Pettitt, Sproul "was well aware that many alumni were more familiar with the roster of the varsity football squad than with the catalog of the Academic Senate." But Sproul thought it better "that an alumnus should know the football players than not know anyone at the University, and alternating praise or criticism following victory or defeat in athletics seemed preferable to chronic apathy."

The editorial decisions of the California Monthly's editors, then, reflected the sentiments and strategies of the university's president as well.*

In addition to publicizing the events in alumni publications, universities cultivated alumni interest in the schools' athletic exploits in a variety of other ways, including organizing alumni gatherings and activities around athletic events, usually football games. Throughout the 1930s, universities advertised the joys of returning to campus for homecoming games, and some institutions tried to transform all football contests into alumni affairs. For example, the University of Texas Ex-Student Association offered an alumni registry at most Texas away games. The announcement explained "oldtimers have a good time when they gather around the Texas Exes' registration table at an out-of-Austin game. They sign the registry then look through all the pages to see if any of their campus cronies have come to the game—and usually some have—then they meet some other Ex standing at the table, and a big session follows." By registering, the Texas Ex
got a free ribbon to wear and also "inform[ed] all other Exes who register later that he is in town and ready to whoop." More than any other university activity or program, football got the alumni ready to whoop.\textsuperscript{25}

While the Texas alumni communities gathered in Oklahoma and Dallas to identify with each other and their alma mater's teams, the University of California alumni let the dates of the Big Game against Stanford and other significant contests dictate their clubs' meeting schedules. In 1929, University of California alumni groups met in Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, Shanghai, Honolulu, London, Paris, Constantinople, Buenos Aires, and many other cities to mark the coming of yet another Stanford game. This tradition continued throughout the decade, as the president's office periodically invited the "sons and daughters of California" to "celebrate the Big Game and pledge anew their loyalty to the University." Through mass telegrams, president Sproul expressed his hope that the meetings would "bring joy in renewed memories of the campus and bright prospects of a victory over our friendly enemy."\textsuperscript{26} After all, these scattered alumni shared more than memories of Berkeley classes; they still had a common enemy.

Through these types of gatherings the universities marketed an idyllic university experience and traded on fond memories of the old campus home. The University of California sought to rekindle the flames of nostalgia with advertisements trumpeting "The Tang of Football is in the Air and the Thrill of College Days is Once Again With Us."\textsuperscript{27} When explaining the appeal of these alumni gatherings coordinated with the university's important football games, the editor of \textit{The California Monthly} stated that the alumnus was "seeking to recapture some of the spirit of undergraduate days, to feel once
more the influence of university life, which unifies greater numbers of men and women, more permanently, than any other factor in American life. If the alumni association could help its members feel younger, more confident and more connected, by helping them recapture the excitement of their undergraduate days, then it was doing its job. Perhaps, especially during the dark days of the depression, the possibility of reliving the excitement, rekindling the “spirit of university life,” and participating, even vicariously, in great victories was ever more appealing.

Moreover, even those alumni meetings that took place in less exotic locations at times not coordinated with specific games often focused on the fortunes of the athletic teams. In January 1936, the *Maryland Alumni News* reported that the university had film footage of almost every Maryland football game from the recently completed season, and it offered these films as an “attraction for alumni get-togethers to follow the Terrapins in action on the gridiron.” The Big Ten also allowed the use of football film footage to serve as attractions for community gatherings. According to a 1937 committee report, conference members could show films to “high school banquets, luncheon clubs, and other similar groups,” with the provision that “detailed description, minute study, and frequent repetition of certain parts of a film” would not occur and that the projector operator would not focus on replays of referees’ mistakes. The conference committee saw the value of using football films to stir up interest, but it did not want to use them to stir up controversy.

Athletic officials often attended community events as ambassadors of the universities. In 1937, the secretary of the Baltimore chapter of the Maryland Alumni Association invited athletic director Geary Eppley to an upcoming meeting to answer
questions about the football team, a meeting that university president (and former football coach) Byrd also attended. The chapter’s secretary informed Eppley that “the whole meeting has been planned with the one object in view, that of stirring up enthusiasm among the Alumni for their Alma Mater.” It is revealing that with the president of the university attending their meeting, the Baltimore chapter’s leaders thought that only a “bull session” about football could enthuse their membership.31

American universities also tried to reenergize and reaffirm their ties to their alumni communities by asking them directly for advice or assistance in athletic matters. They did this most formally through granting the alumni powerful seats on athletic governing bodies. For example, the Athletic Board created at the University of Tennessee in 1935 included five alumni representatives out of fifteen total members, only two of whom were students. After the Board of Trustees adjusted the by-laws in 1936, the five alumni representatives were equal in number to the five faculty members and superior numerically to the two student members. The administrative board at Ohio State was very similar. Under the Athletic Association’s constitution approved in 1930, the alumni held two of ten seats, and this percentage held steady throughout the decade, never falling below the number of seats allocated to current students.32

In their efforts to maintain an interested community of alumni friends, university leaders frequently solicited the input of influential alumni about all sorts of athletic issues, but the officials often got more interest and feedback than they had bargained for. At the University of Texas, the alumni had a great deal of influence in the hiring of football coach Dana Bible, providing a $5,000 bonus for Bible when he signed his contract. Shortly thereafter, Bible validated the legitimacy of alumni assistance by
sending a letter to the alumni associations, asking the alumni to help his program recruit players, employ players, and perform other tasks designed to generate positive sentiment toward the university and its athletic teams. Specifically, Bible asked the Texas alumni to send money to the athletic department so that the school could fund jobs for its athletes. As Bible explained, "No football team is made up of eleven men. The team that wears the Orange and White consists of the entire squad, the entire student body, the faculty and the great group of Texas Exes and friends." He continued, "so I invite you to get into the Longhorn football huddle with hopes that "it may be a close huddle and we all come out with the same signal."\(^3\)

These types of exhortations and sentiments were common throughout the nation, and they only encouraged universities' alumni members to act outside the rules in order to help their alma maters. In 1931, University of California coach Bill Ingram received great attention when he turned down $15,000-20,000 with which he could have "bought" better athletes; others were not so scrupulous. By encouraging the alumni to care about athletics, the universities also ran the risk of having them care too much, and in this way, they invited trouble and charges of corruption and commercialism. Although university leaders could see the downside of alumni preoccupation with intercollegiate athletics, they still continued to use athletics as a tool to keep the alumni community intact and interested in at least one aspect of their alma mater's continued activities.\(^3\)

Universities' leaders recognized that they could not survive on the good will of legislators and their alumni alone; they knew that they had to create feelings of community within their host state's general population as well. American public
universities created their diverse communities of supporters by continuing the commercialization that had grown more prevalent, and that had attracted increased criticism, during the 1920s. Savage's was but only one of many voices decrying the commercialization of college sports during the late 1920s and early 1930s, but with the onset of the Depression and the related decline in athletic revenues, university officials did not decrease their commercial orientation but rather increased it. This increased commercialism occurred in several ways. First, the universities tried to schedule games that would appeal to a broad segment of the population, games that would make them care about the fate of the state's representative team. Second, the universities allowed more advertisers and marketers to associate their products directly with the universities and their athletic teams through advertisements and game-day merchandising. Finally, the universities increasingly began delivering their products to their customers' homes in the form of educational radio programs and especially through wildly popular broadcasts of football games and other sporting events.\(^{35}\)

Officials had long known that traditional games against traditional rivals could generate tremendous amounts of interest in (and income for) a state's main public university, and administrators recognized that more novel intersectional games and intrastate games could do the same. In 1932, for example, the president of Western Maryland College wrote to then University of Maryland vice president Byrd, hoping to inaugurate a series of football games between the two schools. He acknowledged the important role athletics could play in building ties to the state's populations, writing, "I am sure you have in mind the creation of college and university rivalries that will mean much for our state institutions in appealing to the people of our own state." As cited
earlier, University of Tennessee football coach Robert Neyland received credit for creating a situation where "Tennesseans are proud of Tennessee... [they are] proud the nation now looks toward Tennessee with deepest respect. Proud to call [the University of] Tennessee THEIR Tennessee."^36 Neyland continued to satisfy his university and his adopted state when his team beat a New York University squad in 1931, a victory that, according to the headlines, "Gain[ed] Vols Nation-Wide Fame" while also contributing to state-wide pride. Beating a nationally prominent team could galvanize an entire state, but to build a true community of interested citizens, the universities would have to find yet other ways to connect with them.37

The University of California provided the most extreme example of universities using athletics to create more unity within their host states, using the first football games between the Los Angeles and Berkeley campuses of the University of California to further president Sproul's ambitious "One California" agenda. Sproul was president of the entire University of California system, including both the Berkeley and Los Angeles campuses as well as other outposts at Riverside, Davis, San Francisco, and Mount Hamilton, and during the 1930s, as U.C.L.A. in particular grew in size and reputation, maintaining peace among the branches became more difficult. After U.C.L.A. got permission and financing for graduate programs in the early 1930s, it became clearer that the University of California system included two full-fledged universities, not just the one in Berkeley. Sproul was determined to prevent regional jealousies from tearing down the great university that he had helped build, and he reminded U.C.L.A.'s students in 1932 that the state was "building one great university in California" and that the students should "let no small mind direct you along the paths of suspicion, distrust or jealousy."^38

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Historian of the University of California Verne Stadtman argued that “the danger of ill-feeling between the two campuses increased in 1933” when the Los Angeles and Berkeley campuses met for the first time in intercollegiate athletics, and while this might be true in some ways, it is also true that Sproul worked to insure that these contests strengthened and did not undermine the one university ideal. This seemed plausible because the different branches had already begun playing each other in minor sports and basketball, just not in football, without great difficulty or controversy. Trying to jumpstart the football series, the general manager of the U.C.L.A. associated students organization, S. W. Cunningham, argued that if any sport would cause ill will, basketball would have done so, with its close proximity of fans and the roughness of play. However, teams representing the two campuses had met four times in 1931-32 without any difficulty or animus involved. Citing this example, Cunningham argued that “the alumni of the University are not likely to divide in any way over a football game that would cause them to lose sight of their allegiance to the ‘One University’ idea that now appears to be pretty firmly grounded.” Cunningham also noted that having the Berkeley officials continue to refuse to play the Los Angeles football team, when they would schedule games with the private, Los Angeles-based University of Southern California, might create the very hostility that University of California leaders wanted to avoid.  

After authorizing football competitions between the two branches, University of California officials crafted a carefully scripted ceremony designed to communicate the “One University” ideal through the U.C.B.-U.C.L.A. games. Before the inaugural contest, held on November 4, 1933, the two universities’ bands marched into the stadium together, playing the national anthem while the American, U.C.B., and U.C.L.A. flags
ascended the flagpoles together. Following the detailed script, the announcer then explained to the crowd the symbolism and significance of the three flags flying together. Just before kickoff, representatives of the two institutions met in the middle of the field to approve a trophy that would go to the winner and to give each other "best wishes for a friendly rivalry for the future." Then, Sproul spoke on behalf of both universities, declaring this a unique game for several reasons, including the fact that both institutions shared the exact same academic standards and because it was "the first game ever held at which every spectator could rightly claim both teams as his own." Sproul expounded on this theme of communal values and shared interests as represented by the football contest:

The State University is the university of each of us as student, official, parent, or taxpayer, and both these teams represent the State University. You may prefer one team to the other, but they are both your teams. As President of the University in all its parts, I cannot even have a preference, and so this perpetual trophy is delivered to me as a neutral judge. I accept it with that understanding and dedicate it through the long years to clean sport and fair play, to generous rivalry, and to the unity of the University of California.  

Not everyone agreed that the game fostered intra-institutional unity, however important it was, and community-building had never been the sole reason for the contests. Supporters of the proposed football rivalry between U.C.B. and U.C.L.A. contended that the series would do much more for the universities than build the "One University" sentiment; it would also help pay both universities' athletic bills. This could be a persuasive argument in 1932-33, especially at U.C.L.A. where athletic finances were not as sound as they were in Berkeley. For example, in 1932 Sproul cited the costs of the
enterprise when he wrote against the formation of a U.C.L.A. crew team; this was in spite of the fact that Sproul considered “crew racing” to be “the best of college sports.” In his March 1932 letter to Sproul, U.C.L.A.’s Cunningham spent most of his letter to extolling the unifying benefits of the potential rivalry, but he also noted that the “financial returns” would not be bad either. He explained that the profits from the game “would go a long way toward pulling us out of [U.C.L.A.’s] present difficulties.” While the financial potential of the rivalry remained less important than the potential unifying power of the games, the money remained tempting to many on both ends of the state and on both sides of the issue. It was in such big games, popular and crowd-pleasing, that the community-building and commercial interests of the universities overlapped the most.

Many critics argued that the popular “big” and intersectional games, with their large press contingents and lucrative gate totals, epitomized the commercialization of college athletics. In 1929, Howard Savage had lambasted American intercollegiate athletics, particularly football, as being overly commercial, but by 1931 when he reevaluated the collegiate landscape, Savage had seen a remarkable and, to him, desirable change. He observed that “the most recent development in the relation of the public to college sports is a growing resistance on the part of the college to the further commercialization of athletics.” Much to his delight, Savage concluded, “many groups have found the commercialization of college sport to be to their interest. Theirs is the influence that the colleges in general have begun to resist.”
Over the course of the next decade, it became clear that Savage’s optimism was misplaced, that the commercialism of intercollegiate athletics in fact increased during the 1930s, despite continued criticism. For example, the president of the University of California received in the 1930s a letter from a mother whose son had not gotten into the university when less qualified athletes had gained admittance. She saw the disparity as evidence of a moral crisis, asking “is not education defeating itself when such things occur? The whole thing to me seems to be a money making scheme—the way football is being commercialized and especially so if management allows such to continue.”

Throughout the decade many others raised the same questions.

While some criticized what they perceived as the general commercial orientation and the related misplaced priorities of the universities and their athletic programs, others focused on what they saw as specific, egregious examples of improper institutional commercial emphasis. When criticizing the University of Tennessee for leaving 12 football players behind on its 1940 Rose Bowl trip and taking sports writers in their stead, one columnist sarcastically congratulated the university, because “when it makes its drive for fame and filthy lucre in the football world, it is open and aboveboard about its purposes.” In California, an outraged citizen, H. L. Ferguson, argued that “a great institution should have a great soul,” and that when the University of California football program featured a cigarette advertisement inside its front cover, the university revealed that it did not possess such a soul. In fact, according to Ferguson, “a parent or school that places cigarettes in the hands of youth are morally criminal” and by accepting this advertisement the university “not only place[d] the stamp of approval on pupils smoking but [lent] its influence to a nefarious business.” President Sproul’s reply that the
university did not try to encourage or prevent its students from legal activities probably did not persuade his correspondent that this manifestation of commercially sponsored sport was proper.\textsuperscript{47}

Others protested the blatant commercialism in practice, not in theory. At Ohio State the University of Michigan band aroused criticism by spelling out “Buick” on the Ohio Stadium field with its marching members. At the University of Texas, the commercialism appeared in the stands, not on the field. In 1931, the Texas Athletic Council allowed the Universal Brokerage and Distribution Company of Durham, North Carolina to distribute 2,000 advertising seat cushions, and the next year the Council approved letting students sell “miniatures of Longhorn Steers or Bevos [the mascot’s name]” as long as the sales did not occur within the stadium itself and, significantly, as long as the council received 15 percent of the gross sales total.\textsuperscript{48}

This direct linking of commerce and college athletics was repeated all across the nation. One University of Maryland alumnus who had been harassed by vendors and merchants hawking paraphernalia, asked a Maryland official “doesn’t it seem to you even in these days when commercialized football is the rule of the day that some regard should be paid to the alumni and student body who after all are the backbone of the Maryland team’s support?”\textsuperscript{49} A few years later, the university gratefully accepted donated shipments of Wrigley’s gum for its football team members and, within a few years, its representatives were soliciting free chewing gum for the university basketball teams. During the Great Depression, asking for handouts from large corporations did not bother the Maryland officials as much as the advertisement and sale of some of these corporations’ products bothered many in the university’s crowds, but the universities
could logically argue that the advertisers helped support the games that the crowds
traveled to witness. Although regrettable to most observers inside and outside of the
academy, commercialized sport was firmly established by the 1930s, and the Depression
conditions would not facilitate shifts away from this fiduciary focus. In fact, in their
quest to satisfy their constituents and customers, the universities increased their
commercial orientation, and the acceptance of radio broadcasts in just one example of
this.

During the 1930s American universities increasingly took advantage of a new
commercial enterprise and a new form of mass communication to build their vital
communities; they turned to the radio. In the past, universities had used official
publications, press releases, and personal appearances to disseminate information about
their activities, and they continued to do so after the emergence of radio as a powerful
communication force. University officials continued visiting Rotary clubs and other civic
organizations, attempting to incorporate the clubs into the wider university community. The
universities also tried to draw members of the surrounding towns onto campus, and
many justified the numerous stadium expansion projects in these terms, often lowering
ticket prices to keep the games within the price ranges of the surrounding population.

Even then, some university officials recognized that their ticket price adjustments
would not do enough to draw capacity crowds and build concerned communities. At the
University of Tennessee trustees advocated selling football tickets to all of the state’s
high school students at the same price as to university students. Their reasoning was
simple: the university had “practically no use for the recent additions to the Stadium.”
The trustees hoped that selling high school students cheap tickets would increase their
interest "both in the sport and in respect to their state institution." Another trustee, Paul Kruesi, noted that the university's "principal patronage" came from "a comparatively narrow radius of perhaps fifty miles" and that the additional thousand or more high school students might help fill a cavernous stadium that was too often too empty. This would be especially useful because, as Kreusi saw it, "the new Stadium is detrimental to our cause most of the time, because there is no possibility of filling it under normal circumstances, and the psychological effect on those who do attend is awfully bad when they see thousands of unoccupied seats." Kreusi concluded that "any artificial measures we can take to give the semblance of success will be well justified." For Kruesi, reducing prices for high schoolers' tickets would accomplish two important tasks: it would help generate new communities of supporters while also helping convince those that already attended Tennessee games that a community of supporters indeed existed.

This desire to fill the recently expanded stadia across the nation was one reason many university officials lobbied against football game broadcasts, as university officials initially preferred to cultivate the traditional sort of community that gathered together and bought tickets over the imagined communities of loyal supporters that did not make pilgrimages to the campuses for football games. The argument for radio broadcasts was not based on the tremendous profits that the broadcast contrasts offered; in fact, many feared that broadcasts would lead to a net loss for the universities' athletic programs. They reasoned that allowing radio broadcasts would remove the incentive for fans to pay to attend games by allowing them access to the excitement of the games for free over the airwaves. In one representative statement, in 1931 the Executive Committee of the Southern Conference agreed that "broadcasting was detrimental to gate receipts and that
broadcasts should have the approval of the two contending institutions." The Southern Conference later approved a ban on all broadcasts of conference games, based on this belief. During the early 1930s, the University of Texas, followed a slightly different path, trying to attract paying customers and also satisfy those who could not attend the games. The Texas Athletic Council allowed broadcasts of some games, but in many cases it did not permit the radio stations to reveal before the game day, or even before noon of the game day, that they would broadcast the game.53

The Southern Conference ban on radio broadcasts of football games and others like it did not last for long, however, as they fell victim to the argument that such broadcasts could do more good than ill in terms of creating communities of loyal and dedicated university supporters. As one radio executive wrote, upon learning of the Southern Conference's ban, "We cannot conceive of anyone, able to go to a football game, having the time and the money, staying away to listen to the broadcast of same." He continued, "College spirit and loyalty and the love of seeing the game, do not run that way. Those, that can possibly go, go, and those that cannot, follow the broadcast, regretting all the while that they are unable to be at the field and actually be one of the crowd that hear cheering, during the broadcast." But, he reasoned, if the universities really wanted to increase the numbers of people who cared about the universities and their teams, then they would cater to those that wanted to be in the crowd but who could not. These included, according to this correspondent, "The old and feeble. The Invalids. Those temporarily confined to bed," not to mention those that could not afford to attend the games. Moreover, broadcasts could also teach people about the game of football, bringing ever more people into the potential spectator pool.54
While some might dismiss these claimed benefits of broadcasting as the biased boasts of an interested party, the alumni publications of American universities teemed with statements that supported the claims. One University of California alumnus wrote in 1935 that “many of ‘our group’ (California graduates 1930-34) cannot afford to attend more than a game or two a season . . . and the broadcasts hold an important place in maintaining their interest in California activities.” Other California correspondents wrote to president Sproul to tell him about the “most unexplainable thrills imaginable” they had experienced while listening to the 1935 California-Stanford game. Mr. and Mrs. C. C. Crampton described their emotions in this way, “play by play the game went on, our hearts tense and spirits winging their love to ‘Our Boys,’ and finally at the conclusion, when the physical victors marched in front of the U.C. section: we heard only a great hubbub, then a great song burst forth as if from a mighty army; Hail to California, Hall All Hail. What power, what spirit what great Spiritual Victory; nothing I have ever heard over the air equaled it.”

Clearly, the broadcasts of football games could do exactly what university leaders hoped that the games themselves would: bind more closely the interests and feelings of the alumni to their alma mater. During the 1930s it became clear that game broadcasts could also make those who had never attended the schools feel more attached to the universities as well. The best-known example of this phenomenon does not come from the realm of public universities but instead from one particular private university, the University of Notre Dame. Notre Dame recruited its legions of “subway alumni”—primarily urban, working-class, Catholics who had never attended the university but who felt intense loyalty to it—with its national football schedule and its policy encouraging
radio broadcasts of Notre Dame football games. By allowing free broadcasts of its games, and by playing a difficult and glamorous schedule, Notre Dame insured that the radio waves would carry news of its successes across the nation throughout the 1930s. For example, in 1933, C.B.S. broadcast five Notre Dame games on its national network, allowing millions to listen to and identify with the team.57

During the 1930s, many public universities discovered that they too could follow this model and use radio broadcasts to build allegiances and imagined communities of supporters. According to at least one observer, radio broadcasts could even help to diversify the crowds that attended college football games, adding a new group of "self-appointed alumni" to the alumni and students who had previously attended the contests. These "self-appointed alumni" were "those who [had] followed the battles of the teams via radio and [had] come out to see the playing of 'his' college."58

Many of these imagined alumni already had reasons to support the public universities' teams before the advent of radio broadcasts; after all, the teams represented their states and the universities existed because of their tax dollars. With their tax dollars came a vested interest and an important voice. In 1931, after the University of Tennessee followed its policy by denying permission to radio stations wanting to broadcast Tennessee football games because the university feared drops in revenue, a public outcry ensued. The general public's dissatisfaction with the university's stance led directly to House Resolution Number 2, adopted by the state's full House of Representatives. The resolution pointed out that the University of Tennessee existed only at "enormous expense to the tax-payers of the state" and that the football team represented that institution and its host state. The resolution detailed how the university's "great games
[had] been brought to the rural people through the radio,” and that “thousands [had] enjoyed them who could not do so otherwise.” These broadcasts had helped the school become “closer to the people, and . . . come to occupy a position in the life of the state enjoyed by no other tax-supported school in Tennessee.” The resolution concluded with a call to the university’s administration to reevaluate its stance against broadcasts and to, “if possible, allow all games played at the State University to be broadcasted to the people of the State.”

This argument for access to athletic broadcasts based on a sense of taxpayers’ rights indicated that the universities had successfully made their case that the universities represented and served their entire state’s population. In their drive to create communities of people concerned with the universities, the administrators recognized that athletics could create these communities and hold their interest like no other university program. The citizens of Tennessee were not alone in their demands for broadcasts. By the mid-1930s, South Carolina, among other states, had passed a law requiring broadcasts of all football games played by the main branch of the state university. In California, J. E. Gurich wrote to president Sproul as “a former student” and as a “tax payer of this state,” arguing that “the tax payers of California are the people who keep up the University, and they should get a little consideration in return.” The desired consideration was, of course, continued radio broadcasts of California football games.

In April of 1937, The California Monthly announced that the time for “thoughtful discussions and comments” on the past football season had come, and the editors concluded that “no single activity ha[d] brought in wider or more favorable comment
from alumni of the University of California, distributed throughout the cities of California, as well as in far away rural districts of the state, than the broadcasting of the football games participated in by the students of the University.” Intercollegiate athletics, and the broadcasts thereof, had helped created and maintain vibrant communities of alumni and “self-appointed alumni” and had kept these communities interested in the affairs of the university. As The California Monthly editors realized, the football broadcasts made “possible explanation of non-athletic activities, which, in a State University performing manifold services, are exceedingly important.” The broadcasts provided “a better understanding of the University of California to the people of the state. and at the same time carries to them an interpretation of the University in a manner that the man in the street can best absorb.” In other words, by focusing attention on the “personality” of the universities, the leaders allowed the less glamorous character of the university to continue.

This was the vital point; broadcasts of athletic games gave American public universities access, not only to alumni but also to the “man in the street.” Ideally, these audiences became impassioned enough by athletic achievements to support the universities in their non-athletic endeavors. By building communities of loyal athletic supporters through extension programs, community outreach, and radio broadcasts, the universities hoped to created communities that would also express their loyalty to other aspects of the university. Accepting the fact that most alumni members and citizens would care more about the football team than the forensics department, these university officials worked to capitalize on this interest, for the benefit of the athletic programs themselves, but also of the entire university.
Susman, *Culture as History*, 199-200. Susman also noted the importance of history and “the people” to 1930s Americans. He argued that “there was one phrase, one sentiment, one special call on the emotions that appeared everywhere in America’s popular language: the people,” defining the term as one “meant to cut through divisions of class, ethnicity, and ideological distinctions of Left and Right to form a basic sentiment on which a national culture might be founded.” See Chapter 11, “The People’s Fair: Cultural Contradictions of a Consumer Society.” For quotations, see page 212.

Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, revised ed., (New York: Verso, 1991), 4 and 5. Quotation on 5. Historian Daniel Boorstin identified the importance of colleges and universities to feelings of community in the earliest days of American higher education. In his chapter “Culture With Many Capitals: The Booster College,” Boorstin argued that “the distinctively American college was neither public nor private, but a community institution. See Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Americans: The National Experience* (New York: Random House, 1965), 152-161, quotation on 160. Thomas Bender has discussed the nature of American communities in ways similar to Anderson. In his *Community and Social Change in America*, Bender argued that “territorially based interaction represents only one pattern of community, a pattern that becomes less and less evident over the course of American history.” Bender also wrote that “community . . . is best defined as a network of social relations marked by mutuality and emotional bonds.” Again, this definition applies nicely to the bands of alumni, or just citizens, who root for a particular state university’s athletic teams. See Thomas Bender, *Community and Social Change in America* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1978), 6 and 7.


Anderson, *Imagined Communities*. Chapter 3, “The Origins of National Consciousness” addresses most directly the importance of print-capitalism to the formation of national identities. See especially pages, 37-39, 44-46. Chapter 2, “Cultural Roots,” explores the significance of the breakdown of traditional notions of time. On page 26, Anderson explained that the nation “is conceived as a solid community moving steadily down (or up) history.” Providing an example, he wrote, “An American will never meet, or even know the name of more than a handful of his 240,000,000 fellow Americans. He has no idea of what they are up to at any one time. But he has complete confidence in their steady, anonymous, simultaneous activity.”

Scholars of the American consumer culture usually argue that it appeared in its mature form during the 1920s, and they associate its emergence with a shift in societal valuations of an individual’s “character” and personality. In the more impersonal, more urban-focused, mass society that was beginning to dominate American life in the 1920s, fewer people dealt only with people that they already knew very well. Instead, they had to make quick judgments about a person’s abilities and compatibility. These snap assessments were based more on a person’s personality—his or her ability to look, dress, and talk, the “right way”—than on his or her character—deeply held beliefs, values tested over time. Susman has argued that United States underwent a gradual shift in emphasis from inner-directed “character” stressing morality to outer-directed “personality” emphasizing popularity and admiration. He reviewed more than two hundred sources and found that many words were directly associated with “character.” According to Susman, these words included “citizenship, duty, democracy, work, building, golden deeds, outdoor life, conquest, honor, reputation, morals, manners, integrity, and above all, manhood.” (emphasis his). Throughout the 1930s, athletic leaders offered most of these words as products of intercollegiate athletics. See Susman, *Culture as History*, 273-274. Among others, Roland Marchand has discussed how advertisements illustrated this transformation between the years 1920 and 1940. See Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985). Also see Richard Wightman Fox and T. J. Jackson Lears, eds., *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1980* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983).
Sixty-Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Ohio State University to the Governor of Ohio, for the Year Ending June 30, 1936, quotes from pages 1 and 60.

Sixty-Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Ohio State University to the Governor of Ohio, for the Year Ending June 30, 1935, 30.

Raymond A. Pearson to Deans, Directors and Heads of Administrative Departments,” 11 April 1922. (“Publicity [1933],” Series 7, Box 31), Records of the President’s Office, SC, UML.


Robert G. Sproul, “Report of the President of the University,” Report of the President of the University of California, 1938-1940 (Berkeley: University of California Press, March 1941), 11. In 1932, University of Maryland President Raymond Pearson wrote, “without minimizing the value of any other phase of work carried on by the University of Maryland, it may be stated that the Fundamental purpose of the Institution is the training and development of future citizens of the State and Nation. Such training has a distinct economic value, both to the individuals and to society as a whole, but this phase is only one of the benefits derived.

“...It has been my conviction that the tangible values derived from the University of Maryland and its affiliated departments amount to several times as much annually as the funds expended to maintain the entire institution, and that the intangible values I have mentioned are in the nature of a net profit on the investment.” See document beginning, “It is entirely proper that public funds expended by an Institution such as the University of Maryland should be carefully considered by the people of the State.” (“Publicity [1932-33],” Series 7, Box 31), Records of the President’s Office, SC, UML.

Pollard, History of Ohio State University, 293; Callcott, History of the University of Maryland, 319; Geary Eppley to Dr. Crothers, 6 November 1936, (“Geary Eppley, 1934-1936,” Series 2, Box 4), Papers of Geary Eppley, SC, UML; C. Walter Cole to Faculty and Staff Members, May 1939, (“Alumni Day, 1939-1941,” Series 1, Box 1), Papers of Geary Eppley, SC, UML.


Robert G. Sproul, “Report of the President of the University, December 31, 1932,” Report of the President of the University of California, 1930-1932, 9. Thelin made this same point in his chapter about “Regional Pride and Institutional Prestige,” writing “intercollegiate athletics joined agricultural extension services as a means by which the state university could extend real and symbolic affiliation to all citizens of the state or region.” Games Colleges Play, 70. At the University of Maryland, for example, in an explanation of the university’s structure, the Department of Physical Education and Recreation was included in the same group as the Agricultural Experiment Station and the Extension Service. Moreover, the University’s Board of Regents also served as the State Board of Agriculture. See “Efficiency and Economy,” Maryland Alumni News 8 (January 1937): 1.

Albert F. Woods, “Foreword,” in “New Athletic Field of the University of Maryland,” 1920. (“New Buildings, June 1, 1937 through April 30, 1938. [1920-1938],” Series 8, Box N1), Records of the President’s Office, SC, UML.

Savage, American College Athletics, 79.

“Keep Neyland” The Orange and White (Knoxville), 31 October 1929.

19 Charles H. Lupton to Geary Eppley, 27 October 1939, ("Football, 1937-39," Ser.2, Box 2), Papers of Geary Eppley, SC, UML; Geary Eppley to The President, 16 November 1936, ("Georgetown University, 1928-1938," Ser. 2, Box 2), Papers of Geary Eppley, SC, UML. In 1937, the University of Texas responded immediately to an inquiry from Congressman Lyndon Johnson's office about why he had not received his complimentary football pass. The ticket was in the mail the next day. See MB to WLMC, 23 September 1937, ("Intercollegiate Athletics, 1937-38," VF 5/E.A), University of Texas President Office Records, 1907-1968, CAH, UTA.

20 For quotation see J. C. G. to Robert G. Sproul, 19 December 1935, ("1935:390," CU-5, Ser. 2), Office of the President Papers, BL, UCB. For more background information see folder "1935:390-Clippings" in the same location, especially, "Coast Football Storm," San Francisco News, 12 December 1935. The letter also included this passage: "When Assemblyman Ray Williamson of San Francisco threatens to pull down the University of California by building up the state colleges at Fresno and San Jose and the Junior College at Sacramento, as a reprisal we cannot go along with him. It is absurd to let this football issue decide our thinking about educational needs."

21 Robert G. Sproul, "Report of the President of the University, December 31, 1932," in Report of the President of the University of California, 1930-1932, 21; "University of Maryland Alumni Association Financial Statement for Fiscal Year, June, 1940 to June, 1941," ("Alumni Day, 1939-1941." Series 1, Box 1), Papers of Geary Eppley, SC, UML.

22 See any volume of the Maryland Alumni News during the 1930s to see evidence of this point. See The Ohio State University Monthly 28 and 30 for the Ohio State evidence.


24 George A. Pettitt, Twenty-eight Years in the Life of a University President (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 136.


26 Advertisement, "The Tang of Football is in the Air and the Thrill of College Days is Once Again With Us." The California Monthly 23 (September 1929): 69; "Telegram to Be Used for Big Game Meetings," 16 November 1936, ("1936:330," CU-5, Series 2), Office of the President Papers, BL, UCB.

27 "The Tang of Football is in the Air and the Thrill of College Days is Once Again With Us." 69.


30 "Committee Report of Scouting and the Use of Motion Pictures," 1937, ("Intercollegiate Conference—Athletic Director's Correspondence, 1930-1938," 9/e-1/9), Director of Athletics, TOSCA.

Nathan W. Dougherty, "Control of Athletics in the University of Tennessee," 20 July 1940, ("Control of Athletics in the University of Tennessee," Box 21, 12), Nathan Washington Dougherty Collection, SC, UTK: University of Tennessee Board of Trustees Minutes, 10 April 1940, 3; Ohio State Athletic Board Minutes, 28 May 1930, 62; "The Report of the Athletic Board By the Faculty Committee on Athletics and Athletic Eligibility for the Year 1937-38 To the University Faculty," Ohio State University Athletic Board Minutes, 1 March 1939, 9.

University of Texas Athletic Council Minutes, 10 January 1937, 428; Dana X. Bible to H. Y. Benedict, 17 March 1937, ("Intercollegiate Athletics, 1936-37," VF 5/E3), University of Texas President Office Records, 1907-1968, CAH, UTA. Emphasis in original. Two years later, alumni of the University of Maryland offered to raise $10,000 a year to add to a football coach's regular salary if this would allow Maryland to hire the best coach available. The alumni wanted Maryland to "enter upon a major football program whereby they will be able to play on par with the major teams in the adjoining states such as Pennsylvania, University of Virginia, North Carolina, and Duke." See Charles H. Lupton to Geary Eppley, 27 October 1939.


For more on the perceived promise and the implementation of university sponsored educational radio programs, see Joan Shelley Rubin, The Making of Middlebrow Culture (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 270-276. In 1936, O.S.U. president Rightmire wrote, "More directly than any other way, perhaps, the University brings to the people of Ohio its resources through radio. No agency of human communication has more powerfully gripped the minds of men, and none so swiftly and widely makes human contact possible." See The 1936 Report of the Board of Trustees to the Governor. 39.

"Keep Neyland," 31 October 1939.

"Beating N.Y.U. Gains Vols Nation-Wide Fame," Orange and White (Knoxville), 8 December 1931. An article in the December 1931 Journal of Health and Physical Education addressed many of these same points. Entitled, "Is Football Interest Waning?" the article pointed out that "it is becoming more obvious that practice games with easy opponents will not fill the stands. Schools that are anxious to hold their spectator interest will therefore have to be careful in building their schedules to include more teams that offer close and interesting rivalry." See "Is Football Interest Waning?" Journal of Health and Physical Education 2 (December 1931): 22. As Andrew Doyle illustrated through his discussion of the University of Alabama’s 1926 and 1927 trips to the Rose Bowl in California, a victory by a Southern team against a prominent team from outside the region could galvanize the entire South. After Alabama shocked the University of Washington, beating its team 20-19, an Atlanta newspaper argued that an accurate headline should read, "The South 20, the West 19." See Andrew Doyle, "‘Causes Won, Not Lost’: College Football and the Modernization of the American South," The International Journal of the History of Sport 11 (August 1994): 235.

Stadtman, The University of California, 266-267; quoted on 268. For more on the sense of rivalry between north and south California and how this related to the U.C.B.-U.C.L.A. relationship, see Pettitt, Twenty-Eight Years in the Life of a University President, 134-135.


Robert G. Sproul to Ernest C. Moore, 16 September 1932, ("1932:435," CU-5, Ser. 2), Office of the President Papers, BL, UCB.

Cunningham to Sproul, 15 March 1932.


A Mother to President University of California, [no date], ("1931:79," CU-5, Ser. 2), Office of President Papers, BL, UCB.

"Tennessee Goes West," unattributed article attached to W. W. Coile to James D. Hoskins, 30 December 1939, ("Civil Works Administration (1933-1935)," AR-1, Box 4), President's Papers, 1867-1954, SC. UTK.

H. L. Ferguson to Gentlemen, 25 October 1931, and Robert G. Sproul to H. L. Ferguson, 31 October 1931, ("1931:41," CU-5, Ser. 2.), Office of the President Papers, BL, UCB. In 1935, the University of Texas Athletic Council refused to accept a Lucky Strikes advertisement for the football program's front cover. See University of Texas Athletic Council Minutes, 24 May 1935, 375, University of Texas Athletic Director's Office.

Pollard, Ohio State Athletics, 285; University of Texas Athletic Council Minutes, 19 March 1931, 375, and 16 November 1932, University of Texas Athletic Director's Office. Fielding Yost, the University of Michigan athletic director wrote to Big Ten Commissioner John Griffith to explain his university's band's actions. According to Yost, the university could not afford to send its band to Columbus for the game, and Buick came through with the money. In gratitude, the Michigan band formed "B U C K I" on the field and then, while playing "Thanks for the Memories," the band moved the I between the "U" and the "C." According to Yost, this formation lasted only five seconds. Yost also acknowledged that the band thanked Buick over the public address system, but he pointed out that he did not consider this an advertisement and that Ohio State had sold advertisements for the game programs and the broadcasts anyway. See copy of letter from Fielding H. Yost to John L. Griffith, ("Intercollegiate Conference—Athletic Director's Correspondence, 1938-1940," 9/e-1/9), Director of Athletics, TOSUA.


For example, the University of Maryland Athletic Director made frequent visits to Maryland civic clubs. See Henry K. Pasma to Geary Eppley, 12 October 1937, ("Geary Eppley, 1937-1961," Series 2, Box 4), Papers of Geary Eppley, SC, UML.

Paul J. Kruesi to J. P. Hess, 15 October 1938, (Folder 12, AR-8, Box 2), University of Tennessee Business Managers Papers, SC, UTK.
For more about the meager revenue generated by the radio contracts see chapter two and Watterson, *College Football*, 182. Watterson refers to the broadcast contracts as a “small but helpful source of income and pointed out that at many schools, “the profits barely justified commercial radio. Nevertheless, the profit motive triumphed in most cases over arguments for preserving amateur athletics.” the Minutes of the Executive Committee of theSouthern Conference, 27-28 September 1931. (“Southern Conference Minutes, 1930-31,” Series 2, Box 14), Papers of Geary Eppley, SC, UML; James F. Yates to H. C. Byrd, 3 February 1932, (“Southern Conference, 1932, January-February,” Series 2, Box 10), Papers of Geary Eppley, SC, UML; Minutes of the University of Texas Athletic Council, 9 September 1932, 312; Minutes of the University of Texas Athletic Council, 4 September 1934, 359. For more in the history of radio broadcasts in professional sports, see chapter two of Curt Smith, *Voices of the Game: The First Full-Scale Overview of Baseball Broadcasting, 1921 to the Present* (South Bend, IN: Diamond Communications, Inc., 1987); Rader, *American Sports*, 118.

James F. Yates to H. C. Byrd, 3 February 1932.


Mr. And Mrs. C. C. Crampton to Robert G. Sproul. 25 November 1935, (“1935:330,” CU-5, Series 2), BL, UCB.

*Spreber, Shake Down the Thunder*, 461, 452-453, 393.

James F. Yates to H. C. Byrd, 3 February 1932.

W. Y. Boswell, House Resolution Number 2, 2 December 1931, (“Athletic Association, (1900-1945), AR-1, box 3), President’s Papers, 1867-1954, SC, UTK.


J. E. Gurich to Robert G. Sproul, 5 May 1933, (“1933:500,” CU-5, Series 2). Office of the President Papers, BL, UCB.

“The defects of American college athletics are two: commercialism, and a negligent attitude toward the educational opportunity for which college exists.”

—Howard Savage, 1929

“To be sure, big-time college sports has entertained the American public, but it has all too frequently done so at the expense of our colleges and universities, their students, faculty, and staff, and the communities they were created to serve. They have infected our academic culture with the commercial values of the entertainment industry. They have distorted our priorities through the disproportionate resources and attention given to intercollegiate athletics. . . . Most significantly, big-time college sports have threatened the integrity and reputation of our universities, exposing us to the hypocrisy, corruption, and scandal that all too frequently accompany activities driven primarily by commercial value and public visibility.”

—James Duderstadt, 2000

“Sports as big business is suitable for the marketplace and has proved to be a profitable way to tap into the national psyche. Sports as big business for colleges and universities, however, is in direct conflict with nearly every value that should matter for higher education. In the year 2001, the big business of big-time sports all but swamps those values, making a mockery of those professing to uphold them.”

—A Call to Action: Reconnecting College Sports and Education, 2001

On a fall Saturday afternoon in an American college town, interested spectators can witness the creation of community identities in the cheerleader outfits worn by three-year old girls and the football helmets worn by young boys playing in the parking lots. They can also witness the assertion of allegiances and the confirmation of community in the thousands of purchased shirts, hats, pants, overalls, sunglasses, ties, jackets, and other types of apparel and body paint that adorn the fans streaming into the stadium or into the local bars and restaurants to watch the game and to live and die with “their” team. This sort of fanaticism is not unique to the late 20th and early 21st centuries; indeed it existed in
the late 19th and early 20th centuries as well. Looking back from a vantage point of more than sixty years after the Depression, it is clear that only the numbers of schools and fans has changed; the eagerness of many to define themselves partially through the athletic activities of students attending a particular school has not.

But for this phenomenon to continue, college athletics had to survive as an institution the financial, social, cultural, and ideological challenges of the 1930s. This dissertation helps explain why and how it did so, addressing at the same time why many leading Americans at the time thought this survival was important. American public universities faced a host of difficulties during the 1930s, as their leaders had to confront the pressures of educating increasing numbers of students with decreasing amounts of state funding. Federal assistance helped the schools and many of the students, but the influx of federal money could not replace the absent state appropriations. Compounding the universities’ financial troubles, social unrest disrupted most of the nation’s campuses. During the 1930s, a vocal minority of students questioned the organization of American society, suggesting alternative and sometimes radical political, economic, and racial structures. Their voices, though relatively few, attracted a great deal of attention to their campuses, but their university presidents did not desire such publicity when they were trying to persuade their states’ leaders and citizens that the universities were working to uphold “traditional American values,” not destroy them.

These universities used their athletic programs as a mechanism to uphold these traditional values, and, at the same time, to promote a new set of consumer values as well. Nationally, despite a wave of criticism of the commercialization and corruption of college athletics, male university and athletic leaders emphasized the importance of
intercollegiate athletics to the transmission of desired masculine traits and habits. Through participation in, or even observation of, intercollegiate athletics college men could learn how to compete relentlessly, play by a set of fixed rules, be an individual but still work as part of a team, and accept victories with magnanimity and defeats without complaint. These leaders believed that their programs would not only create young men well prepared for life in modern society but also that these properly trained men would help protect that very society from the many threats of the 1930s. Specifically, athletic leaders hoped that the lessons of competitive athletics would inspire the young men to embrace the principles of democratic government and a laissez-faire economy and to resist government interference in their life and society. In a time of social turmoil and an increasingly powerful federal government, athletic leaders stressed the societal significance of their activities.

Similarly, most college physical educators structured their women’s athletic programs so that they would help preserve traditional feminine values and life habits. Entering the 1930s, most white college women had access only to athletic programs that taught a different version of democracy than did the men’s. Whereas the men’s athletic programs stressed the importance of competition and individualism to the survival of a democratic society, the women’s programs de-emphasized individual acclaim and attention in favor of group activities. In many ways, the women’s athletic programs were a conscious reaction to the problems many women saw in the operation and orientation of men’s college athletics and in women’s industrial league athletics. Rejecting these two models of sport, and for a variety of ideological, pedagogical, and personal reasons, the female physical educators argued that only by denying gifted athletes special
opportunities not available to the others, de-emphasizing competition and the importance of victory, and allocating precisely the same amount of time and resources to all college women, could college women learn their role in the American democratic system.

As a new generation rose to prominence in the physical education profession during the 1930s, a generation that had experienced relative freedom of thought and activity compared to its predecessor, some of the younger educators began to question the dominant set of beliefs. Although Ohio State physical educators led this challenge, it was not isolated to the Columbus campus. Instead, the O.S.U. women drew inspiration from existing tournaments and the constant innovations occurring across the nation. However, despite their perceived strength in numbers, when it came time for a standoff with their profession's leaders, the Ohio State women stood virtually alone. Although their proposed W.N.C.A.A. and a national intercollegiate golf tournament encompassed most of the ideals generally accepted by the profession, the promotion of limited high-level competition and the recognition of national champions was enough to scuttle all chances of widespread professional acceptance. While many younger physical educators were willing to accept the notion that a democratic model of sport had to recognize differences in ability and provide equal opportunities to the skilled as to the unskilled, the vast majority of the profession was not ready to take that step. The Ohio State-sponsored inaugural intercollegiate golf tournament for women, however, re-ignited the public and professional debate about the proper limits of women's athletic and competitive activities and was one of the first steps toward Title IX, the federal mandate of non-discrimination.

Although the university and athletic leaders argued that their programs and activities could play a vital role in preserving traditional American values, in fact, they
also helped solidify and preserve a new set of American values associated with the consumer culture. Throughout the Depression, university and athletic leaders, male and female, packaged their programs as products able to deliver certain benefits to a variety of consumers. While university presidents labored to demonstrate the utility of their institutions to every member of the represented states, athletic leaders argued that their programs would help preserve cherished American values and institutions. Despite the protests of critics, because of Depression conditions university and athletic decision-makers further commercialized college athletics, letting finances dictate scheduling priorities and ticket prices and allowing commercial radio broadcasts of their games.

During the 1930s University leaders used these wildly popular radio broadcasts and athletic events to create communities of interest across their states, if not the nation. Although many educators did not like the fact that athletics could interest more people more intensely than any other activity of the universities, most university officials eventually embraced athletics as a way to keep the universities in the public eye and as a way to cultivate important relationships. Through mass media and especially the radio, the universities used athletics to construct "imagined" communities of interest, drawing the "self-appointed alumni" into the circle of people concerned about the public universities, or at least about one part of them.

College athletics took on an increased importance during the Depression years. As a social and cultural institution, it survived the lean years in better shape than it had entered them. By the end of the 1930s, with the possibility of war looming on the horizon, most educators and other Americans looked to athletics to prepare and toughen American youth both physically and mentally for the years to come. Still, even without
the added justification of preparation for war, college athletics were in good shape. Financially, by the late 1930s at most institutions football was beginning to return to its previous profit levels; ideologically, the argument that athletics served as appropriate social and democratic training tools had been persuasive; culturally, the games remained popular mass entertainment events. By using new consumer culture techniques to market activities intended to preserve "traditional" values and institutions, the leaders of American universities and their athletic programs had successfully protected these programs from the financial, critical, social, and cultural threats of the Depression years.

During World War II, many schools cancelled or at least curtailed their men's and women's athletic programs. This reduction was not the product of a perceived lack of community interest or a new belief that athletics did not belong on American college campuses. On the contrary, the rhetoric and belief systems supporting the place of athletics within the academy became even stronger and more forceful when the stakes for the nation and its individual citizens and soldiers became much higher. During the 1940s and 1950s, as the G.I. Bill sent more men and women to college than ever before, as and radio networks and broadcasts expanded both their range and power, Americans enjoying the affluent society were less prepared than ever to jettison such a prominent part of their nation's social and cultural life as college athletics. After 15 years of surviving hardships and making sacrifices, Americans and their universities' officials were not inclined to remove popular college athletic programs from their universities. Since the end of the Depression, the combination of increasing leisure time for the middle class, lucrative new commercial opportunities for the universities, the explosion of television coverage of college athletics, and ever-increasing networks of college graduates (along with their
families and friends who affiliated themselves with particular universities) have
continued to buttress universities' athletic programs from cyclical waves of criticism.

This insularity has not gone unquestioned. Just as it was in the 1930s, the place of
varsity athletic programs within the academy continues to be a hotly debated topic at the
dawn of the 21st century. As any observer of modern American life and culture will
testify, women's and men's intercollegiate athletics now occupy a more significant place
in the national consciousness and national economy that ever before. This condition is
the result of schools consciously employing the tactics that secured the survival of
college athletic programs during the Great Depression. Football continues to provide the
vast majority of athletic revenues, but even with sometimes staggeringly large income
totals, most schools' athletic departments fail to break even, much less turn a profit.
Universities, however, perhaps more than ever, continue to rely on their athletic programs
to keep the interest of their alumni, and they utilize all methods of mass communication,
including radio, television, and Internet broadcasts, to build more diverse and numerous
communities of concern across the nation. This trend has only grown more powerful
over the decades, and nothing indicates that it will weaken.

If the "big-time" label still applies to American college athletics, the scale and in
many ways the character of the operations to which it refers has changed dramatically.
Whereas in the 1930s most universities hoped to make a few thousand dollars from their
new radio broadcasting contracts, in the 1990s, CBS paid more than $6.2 billion dollars
for the right to broadcast the annual N.C.A.A. men's college basketball tournament for 11
years. The most significant change in the nature of intercollegiate athletics has been the
gradual opening of opportunities to previously excluded racial groups and the growth in
women’s varsity athletic programs and opportunities since the 1972 passage of Title IX.
As an indicator of the successes of this legislation, and also of the continuing disparity
between women’s and men’s college athletics, in 2001 ESPN purchased the women’s
basketball tournament broadcast rights for the same period for a relatively paltry $200
million. Many women’s varsity programs have become exactly what the physical
education professional leaders feared in the 1930s: competitive, commercialized, and
constantly publicized. In short, women’s athletics are now also big-time now.

If the core characteristics of intercollegiate athletic programs would be familiar to
a time-traveler from the 1930s, so too would the central criticisms voiced about these
programs. Over the past eighteen months alone, four significant critiques of the conduct
and emphasis placed on intercollegiate athletics appeared in print. Through extensive
coverage in the national press, including the Washington Post, The New York Times,
The Los Angeles Times, and The New Yorker, these works sparked a wide-spread, public and
long-running discussion about the issues central to this study: how do universities finance
their intercollegiate athletic programs; how do they justify these programs; how do big-
time athletics affect the formation and operation of communities?

The current list of critics’ concerns would sound distressingly familiar to Howard
Savage and the other authors of 1929’s American College Athletics. as would the many of
the responses to the criticisms. This is not to imply that nothing has changed; much has.
College athletics are unquestionably “cleaner” now that they were in the 1930s. Coaches
do not gain national acclaim simply for refusing to buy players, and universities
interested in maintaining their eligibility must do more than simply discourage their
alumni from creating slush funds. Now, thanks to a much stronger, many would argue too strong, N.C.A.A., observers can rest assured that all student athletes are at least enrolled in the universities they represent. That was simply not the case in the early decades of the 1900s.

Old arguments in support of college athletics die hard, and many continue to laud intercollegiate athletic programs for their educational value. At least many praise the educational potential of athletic programs. For example, James Duderstadt, the former president of the University of Michigan, explained his views on page 10 of his largely critical *Intercollegiate Athletics and the American University*: “As a former student-athlete, as a faculty member, as an academic administrator, and, quite frankly, as a fan at the University of Michigan, I have long held the view that sports can contribute to the educational mission of the university.” He did not, however, provided details about how this advancing of the educational mission occurs, stating only that it could. Duderstadt was much more specific when he echoed legions of other observers, both present and past, noting that “varsity sports can provide unifying events that pull together the extraordinary complex and diverse communities that make up the contemporary university.” Still, despite the potential educational and the real community-building benefits of varsity athletics, Duderstadt recognized that unreformed intercollegiate athletics have the “potential to do great harm to the university.”

Other studies posit that athletics already are doing great harm to American colleges and their students and raise questions about the types of communities athletics are creating on American campuses. Indiana University’s Murray Sperber entitled his 2000 critique *Beer and Circus: How Big-Time College Sports is Crippling*
Undergraduate Education, while in 2001, James Shulman and William Bowen chose a more restrained title: *The Game of Life: College Sports and Educational Values*. With detailed descriptions of the connections between university students' binge drinking, gambling, excessive partying, and big-time athletics, and with titles such as "Rally Round the Team—As Long as it Wins and Covers the Spread," Sperber clearly expressed his belief that college sports help create communities and foster values that undermine, not support, the educational core of American universities. With a different set of evidence and writing from different perspectives, Shulman and Bowen present an equally scathing, if more measured, critique of the ways intercollegiate athletics affect campus communities.

As statisticians and officers of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (Bowen is the former president of Princeton University), these two authors put more than 40 years of data from the nation's elite universities to good use. Since these authors focused on the most selective of American colleges and universities, some might expect that they would not find the same sorts of athletics-related problems that large, less selective, public universities face. Instead, they discovered that the problems are more pronounced, and more troubling, at their examined institutions. Shulman and Bowen argued, "*Athletics is a much more serious business, in terms of its direct impact on admissions and the composition and ethos of the student body, at an Ivy League school or a coed liberal arts college than at a Division IA university*" (emphasis in original). In schools with small student populations and numerous athletic programs, athletes can constitute almost 40 percent of the student body. These athletes enter these elite institutions with test scores and grade point averages well below the general student average; once matriculated, as a
group they fail to do even as well as they had been projected to do. Moreover, the athletes, male and female, generally eschew traditional liberal arts majors in favor of more "practical" business and social science programs and insulate themselves within "jock" communities, thus further limiting their contact with their fellow students. By doing this, they fail to take advantage of the opportunities that their athletic abilities have provided for them and have, in real terms, taken from others. Shulman and Bowen concluded that the schools that allow this to happen, simply put, concentrate too much on athletics and "are not focused on fulfilling their educational mission."

All of these studies highlight the problems associated with the hyper-commercialism of intercollegiate athletics, the root of most evil they associate with college sports, and they all offer suggestions about how to address the problems. The Knight Foundation Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics' 2001 report, entitled A Call to Action: Reconnecting College Sports and Higher Education, tries to rally the troops for reform with rhetoric that recalls the Cold War: "The athletics arms race continues only on the strength of the widespread belief that nothing can be done about it. Expenditures roar out of control only because administrators have become more concerned with financing what is in place than rethinking what they are doing." The report continues, arguing that "the market is able to invade the academy both because it is eager to do so and because overloaded administrators rarely take the time to think about the consequences" and offering a wide array of actions that would help align more appropriately the influence and importance of athletics on American college campuses.
At the opening of the 21st century, despite the enormous number of positive changes in the operation of college athletics, those interested in changing the existing balance between the athletic and academic sides of American universities are still confronting the same problems, and proposing the same types of solutions, as did their predecessors many decades ago. However, if the ideological and financial challenges of the 1930s could not force substantive changes, then the current reformers should not be too optimistic. After all, the same conditions that saved intercollegiate athletics during the Depression exist in more pronounced forms today: the universities have spent too much money to drop athletics completely; their leaders feel that they must continue escalating the commercialization of the programs in order to pay for the facilities, salaries, and to keep up with their rivals; and through a wide variety of mass media, colleges can still gain much more attention and create deeper allegiances through college athletics than through any other tool at their disposal. Appropriately enough, while writing this epilogue I received a letter from the University of Tennessee Alumni Association announcing that central Ohio's Volunteers will gather every week throughout the fall at a local restaurant to watch the UTK football team play. I'm sure the turnout will be strong and the crowd enthusiastic. I might go myself.
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