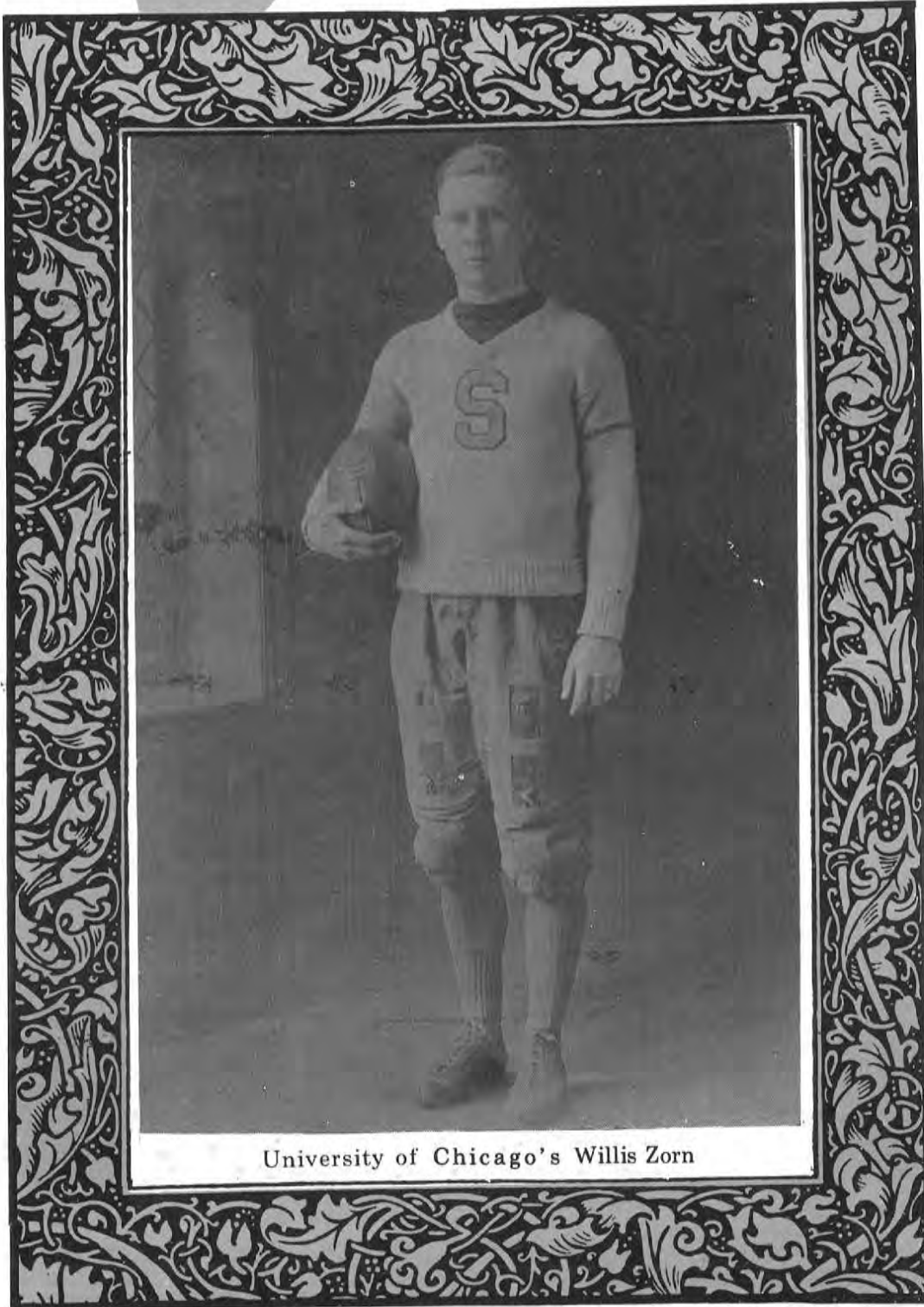


SPORTS LAND

75¢

Bill Zorn Takes On The Fabled Red Grange
The Man Vs. The Skii Hill - Hardscrabble
Ducks Over The Marsh Part II
"The Day The Chippewa Marines Played
The Green Bay Packers"
Sports And Your Body



University of Chicago's Willis Zorn



Zorn



Hagen

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TWO SPLENDID FOOTBALL STARS MEET-WHEN BIG BILL ZORN FACES RED GRANGE - A PAIR OF REAL GRIDIRON HEROES

Although college football fills a large page in the scrapbook of American History, no words can adequately portray its impact on the cultural development of our nation. The Saturday afternoon spectacle of huge stadiums filled with emotionally charged fans and athletes has become as much apart of the American Autumn as falling leaves, and brisk westerly winds. And the list of men who have walked from college gridirons into some of the most prestigious leadership positions in our nation stands as testimony to the noble ingredients of character and sportsmanship so deeply imbedded in the game . . . the same ingredients that flavor our country's heritage.

Since 1896, the rules have become more refined, the strategies more complex, and the participants bigger, stronger and faster.

As the news and entertainment media have popularized the game, the stadiums have grown to accept thousands of fans each season who ring the fields to rise and fall, and live and die with Alma Mater. But the basics have not changed, and probably never will. The name of the game is still "Score", and the issue at stake, as it has always been, is "Who's Number One"?

The legendary, Walter "Pudge" Heffelfinger left guard for the 1880 Yale team, was only a few days from his 66th birthday when he played his last game. It was as if "Pudge" had probed deeper and got closer to football's true meaning. He often said, "A game that can keep you young and vibrant and all steamed up is a precious thing."

The history of football is one of growth and development, and it is

one of men . . . men whose destinies have been shaped by, and who have shaped the destiny of colleges. Walter Camp, Alonzo Stagg, Knute Rockne, Harris Yost, John Heisman, Bernie Bierman, Earl Blaik, are just a few of the great builders of men through football. Just a few of those whose every step on the gridiron will still be cheered and cherished generations from now. It is these men, and men like them, who we are most indebted to . . .

This is a story of one of those character building, gee-whiz fable gridiron heroes. One of the 100 percenters the Amos Alonzo Stagg left his legacy to. A story of a player, coach and a man who has, as did his predecessors, passed on to thousands of his students the fulfillment of sports . . .

October 28, 1922, Stagg Field, Chicago, Illinois, a date and a place to remember. The fabled "Team of Destiny" was in town to play football. As they ate in the Nassau Field House, they stared at placards proclaiming: "A team that won't be beat can't be beat." The inspiring words of Johnny Poe, earlier Princetonian star of yesteryear. Yes, this was the always devastating Princeton Tigers ready to do battle with one of those new upstarts from the West.

As the Tigers took the field they noted how huge the Chicago players looked in their formfitting deep maroon jerseys. What swank figures they cut in their tailor-made uniforms. It might have been some crack platoon of the pre-war Prussian guard, stepping out smartly for parade.

In this meeting on Stagg Field, they expected to meet wild west figures, not Beau Brummel tradition. Probably because the Tiger's had never really been this far West and after all they did expect at least a few Indians at the game. There stood the immortal men of the Maroon, who had beaten, by some strange fate, the Tigers last year 9-0 on Princeton's Field, breaking the all powerful illusion that the East was invincible.

"Let's go" shouted Tiny Lewis, the hulking Chicago captain, who started at left guard.

"Go Chicago!" echoed the 33,000 grid Mid way crowd. "Power down the middle will be our plan," said the stout like bull of John Thomas Chicago's fullback.

And down the middle they did

move in a sixty yard drive. Princeton forwards had never faced such relentless power. They were shoved contemptuously aside as if they were midgets.

Before the raccoon-coated grads could sample their hip flasks, Chicago was over for the first touchdown. What mattered if halfback Jim Pyott missed the point after. Who cared.

Confident in their strength, the Chicago players were annoyed rather than worried when Princeton leaped ahead with a surprising touchdown at the start of the second quarter. A long pass caught the Maroon secondaries sound asleep. The goal was kicked: Princeton 7, Chicago 6.

"Let's get that one back," yelled Harry Thomas, John's brother and halfback on the Maroon's squad. Sliding inside the Tigers tackles, bulling their way through center, the mullberry jerseyed backs ate up the chalk marks.

John Thomas, sinewed like an Andalusian bull, hammered Princeton's groggy line to a pulp. It was "Thomas for five yards-Thomas for six yards-Thomas for five yards." When Thomas began to wobble a bit, Amos Alonzo Stagg the 60 year old coach of Chicago's Maroons, sent in Big Bill Zorn.

"Zorn for seven yards through guard-Zorn eight yards inside tackle-Zorn five yards up the middle," droned the announcer. "Take Zorn out and put Thomas back in!" bellowed the Princeton fans. From the standpoint of Princeton's team the change was hurting them.

The Maroons slashed off tackle which brought the ball to the

Tigers 5-yard line. Here Princeton fell for a fake and John Thomas fell through the weak side for a touchdown. Again the goal was missed. Who gave a darn. The score was 12 - 7, now the West was riding high, and more to come.

The half ended a moment later. But who cares. Zorn and Thomas are making paper hoops of the line, with our men from tackle to tackle poking holes as easy as sticking fingers into soap bubbles.

Quarterback Otto Strohmeier was playing the game of his life and was running the team like a demon, but he was changed to end position. Would this have a psychological effect on the Tiger aggregation?

At the start of the second half Bill Zorn was at fullback and Princeton kicked off. Zorn's great bucking brought the ball to the 25-yard mark. Stagg made another change to really get this steamroller moving. He shifted Zorn to halfback and John Thomas again sent the turf a churing at fullback. Plunges by these two men brought the ball within striking distance. Thomas made his third marker up the middle. Chicago 18, Princeton 7. Again the Maroons failed to make the goal after, but who cares!

The teams changed sides for the last period. Chicago punted deep to little Gorman, who caught the pigskin in the shadow of his own uprights and swirling quickly, essayed a daring lateral. The referee ruled that the ball had been thrown forward. Princeton was penalized back to her own two-yard line.

With Chicago ahead 18 to 7 and



Bill Zorn, Maroon football stars, who will show the Michigan "Aggies", a trick or two on Stag Field tomorrow.



PRINCETON vs MICHIGAN 1922 21-18

eleven minutes remaining in the game, the impossible struck. As the Tigers lined up to punt from their own end zone, Chicago got ready to block the punt. "Block that punt!" chanted Chicago's cheering section. Scentsing another touchdown, the Maroons tried desperately to obey that slogan. They stormed through blindly, arms flaying the air for the kick that never came.

Cool as ice, Cleaves faked a punt, pivoted to his right, and arched a long bomb over toward the East sideline. Running on the cleats of his shoes, little Gorman kept his rendezvous with that flying ball. He picked it out of the air with his fingertips and darted to midfield before the Chicago safety man nailed him.

Princeton was forced to kick, and then luck smiled again on the Team of Destiny. Chicago's substitute center made a crazy snap, the ball missed the man it was intended for and bounced crazily off of Big Bill Zorn's shoulder pad and caromed straight into the arms of Howard Gray, Princeton's alert end. Gray didn't have to break his stride. He scampered forty-three yards across the Maroons goal. The try for extra point was good. The score was Chicago 18, Princeton 14, with six minutes to go.

The unexpected touchdown "hopped up" the Princeton Tigers. They got the ball after a punt on their own 42-yard line. Passes and a four yard penalty brought the ball to the Chicago 7-yard line. It took four downs to make it but on the last play and three yards to go,

Crum of the Tigers didn't stop until he had knifed over the Chicago's goal. The try after split the uprights: Chicago 18, Princeton 21.

With minutes remaining in the game, the Maroons opened up their much heralded open game and drove the fans into a frenzy of excitement. The air was full of footballs, and everyone of them came to rest in Maroon-jerseyed arms.

It was what "Old Man" Stagg had been waiting for. During the intermission he had begged his quarterback to use the pass. "They've tightened up their line defense-throw the ball," he had ordered.

That flurry of Chicago passes devoured distance. Strohmeir caught the final toss on Princeton's six-yard stripe. Thirty seconds to play-and the Chicago quarterback switched back to his old line hammering tactics.

Wham! Two yards inside tackle. Biff! Two yards through center. Again, the thud of colliding bodies and only a yard separated the ball from the last stripe. Fourth down-a yard to go-seconds to play!

Had Alonzo Stagg been a man of less integrity, the out come may have been different. During the previous Winter, as a member of the rules committee, Stagg sponsored legislation to prevent the transmission of information from the bench to the playing field by a substitute.

Assistant Coach Fritz Crisler pleaded with Stagg to send his son, a substitute quarterback, into the game with orders to pass.

"With Princeton massed to stop

Thomas or Zorn in the middle," cried Fritz, "the end zone is wide open. Your son will be the hero of the game."

Coach Stagg only shook his head.

"No, he said, I have to live with my conscience. Let the kids work it out by themselves. I've done the best I can for you; Stagg's said to himself, you'll have to use your own judgment now!"

Princeton's judgment was as good as Chicago's was bad. Still you would hardly call it judgement for every Tiger knew intuitively that Chicago would stake its last throw on a straight-center buck.

Those solid striped legs massed for the charge. The Nassau secondaries, blanket in the Maroon wave.

For a heart-sickening second it seemed as if Thomas's leather helmet projected across the line. Then he collapsed in a welter of black and orange-a few scant inches of the white-washed striped.

Nobody heard the whistle, so deafening was the tension-snapping roar that went up from the crowd. Final score: Princeton 21, Chicago 18. So it stands

The Chicago papers claimed we'll never see or hear a game to match that one. Its been billed as college footballs most exciting game!

Says Willis Zorn, retired Coach Dean of sports University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, and fullback who played his heart out in that fabled game, "that's where "SONOVABUCK" was born! Bill says, of the busted play that hit him in the shoulder, "The



Amos Stagg

One of
football's greatest innovators, Stagg
coached for 70 years, but his lasting
mark as a man is his unyielding idealism

reserve center Bill Dawson came in for Ralph King and he got the signals balled up, and I mean balled up! He threw the ball at me it hit my shoulder. I was suppose to be in a blocking assignment and he was suppose to have centered the ball to the halfback from the single wing formation. Howie Gray scooped it up and that was it, he was gone for a touchdown! I'll be a "sonovabuck" if they didn't score again! But we did come back and marched right back down there to the two yard line. Thomas was playing half and I was at full then, and I'll be a "sonovabuck" if we couldn't get it over. After the game the fans didn't even move out of the stands, they were so stunned," Zorn remembered sadly.

"Stagg's was just that kind of a guy that you hear about, Bill said earnestly. He believed in what he believed in and there was no changing or cheating. He didn't believe in professional football either, that's why I didn't play. But some of the guys played under assumed names." Bill remembers many things Stagg said or did. Stagg's was everything to football then.

"You know when they had Stagg's 100th birthday party, UCLA's Coach Red Sanders, who had just been caught in a recruiting violation, he took his seat on the rostrum and said sheepishly, "Jesse James will now break bread with a saint, Bill recalled.

Also at that birthday party, Staggs said, "I may go on forever, because statistics show that few men die after the age of 100."

Willis Lawrence Zorn, was born

and raised in Stevens Point, Wisconsin, March 30, 1899. He started playing football in 1915 for the High School at Stevens Point. "I played end at first then switched to fullback my last two years in school," Bill reminisced.

"You know then that we didn't have a spiral ball that we have today. It was almost round, which made it hard to pass. Also you would have to lace it up, because there was a bladder in side of a casing. You had to blow it up and put a rubber band around the nipple and then lace it up quickly before the air escaped. I use to get out of class to blow the balls up before the games back at "Point", laughed Bill

Bill's Father was a railroad man for the Soo Line, he was a car inspector and did alot of traveling around the state. We once moved to Irvine, Wisconsin, which is now part of Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. This was the divisional point for the old Wisconsin Central, which later became apart of the Soo Line. "He died when he was a young man, just forty-five years old, I was a freshmen in high school then, Bill said quietly. His name was Carl and we spent alot of time together hunting and fishing. I received a pass from the Soo Line to travel on the train until I was eighteen."

I went one year to normal school at Stevens Point, but the girl I was going with in high school went to Chicago to study music. I followed her down there and ended up going to the University of Chicago, Bill said. I originally intended to take up accounting and get a business degree, before I got involved in

football and Mr. Staggs" The girl Bill followed down to Chicago he later married. And as Virginia Zorn puts it, "Bill and I went together since high school and we never dated anyone else, he was a pretty faithful guy."

Amos Alonzo Stagg was all the inspiration Bill needed to decide his career. Staggs is known today as the Grand Old Man of Football and he lived to be 106 years old coaching for over 70 years. No man brought into the sport more lofty ideals. His remarkable longevity of service, inventive genius and noble ideals placed him in the fore ranks of the games greatest coaches and he continues to live in the memory of millions of his enthusiastic fans.

"He wanted to be remembered as an honest man, Bill said. And honest he is remembered." He was once asked to referee games his own teams played in and did just that. Football to him was a means to an end: teaching young men to be honorable. He force-fed his own impeccable standards to his players and to his family, and though some eventually strayed, he was adored for what he believed and, rarer, practiced.

Bill lived as close as he could to Staggs Spartan discipline. "I entered the University of Chicago in 1920 and played freshmen ball. I made the varsity team the next year 1921 and played for three years. During those three years, Chicago lost two conference games in the Big Ten. We did lose another game and that was the big game with Princeton, 21 to 18. One of the conferences loses was to the Red Grange team of 1923," so stated

(Continued on page 44)

Bill proudly.

Big Bill Zorn had quite a career for the Chicago Maroon in his three varsity years. He was known as one of the great punishing backs of the all time Big Ten. Stagg's teams specialized in depth in fullbacks and Big Bill Zorn fit the bill.

One Chicago scribe put it this way: "Take Willis Zorn. He's regarded as a marvel. He plays fullback and bucks like a fiend; he's the longest passer on the team; and defensively he is a wonder. In the Chicago-Illinois game, the first five times Grange carried the ball Zorn brought him down. Why all this talk about Grange of Illinois? Do we forget that right in our own back yard at Stagg Field we have the greatest all around player in the country? Fullback Zorn-a consistent ground gainer and a whiz on defense. Hats off to Zorn!

Yes, Big Bill Zorn came with high credentials back in the twenties. And the twenties produced many an athletic and many men to mold other men of the future.

One of Bill's fond memories was the game with Illinois and the immortal Red Grange. Grange has been recorded in football history as the "Gallop Ghost".

"A streak of fire, a breath of flame
Eluding all who reach and clutch;
A gray ghost through into the game
That rival hands may never touch.

But in the game of 1923 Grange didn't run off the field and straight into Valhalla.

"The build up was terrific for the big game, Zorn reminisced. We had signs saying, 'Get Grange', 'Stop

Grange', and so forth. I was really psyched -up for him!" said Bill. There were poems and statements in the paper to bring us to a fever pitch."

"Says Harold Grange to Willis Zorn:

"You may fell pert this autumn morn,

But wait till Saturday, My lad,
And you'll be feeling awful bad.

"Your legs, for instance will be lame

And other portions of your frame
Will ache like sin and mentally
You'll be sore as sore can be."

Says Willis Zorn to Harold Grange:

"Perhaps, when Saturday's affair
Is thru I'll ache, as you declare;
With shooting pains my legs may throb

Likewise my vertebrate and knob
"But mentally I'll be quite keen
Because the well-known Stagg machine

Will run you ragged on your range."

The Maroons entered the game without the services of Harry Thomas, around whom the whole formations were built. John Thomas was forced to fill in and try to imitate his services to baffle the Illini. Rain fell throughout the game. "The Chicago team pulled their train right up by the stadium because that's the way we traveled then, Bill remembered." Illinois Central had special trains then and the team ate and lived right inside the coaches. They even went to the train at half times. "We stayed in the train right up to game time because of the rain. People were walking by in the rain and the mud

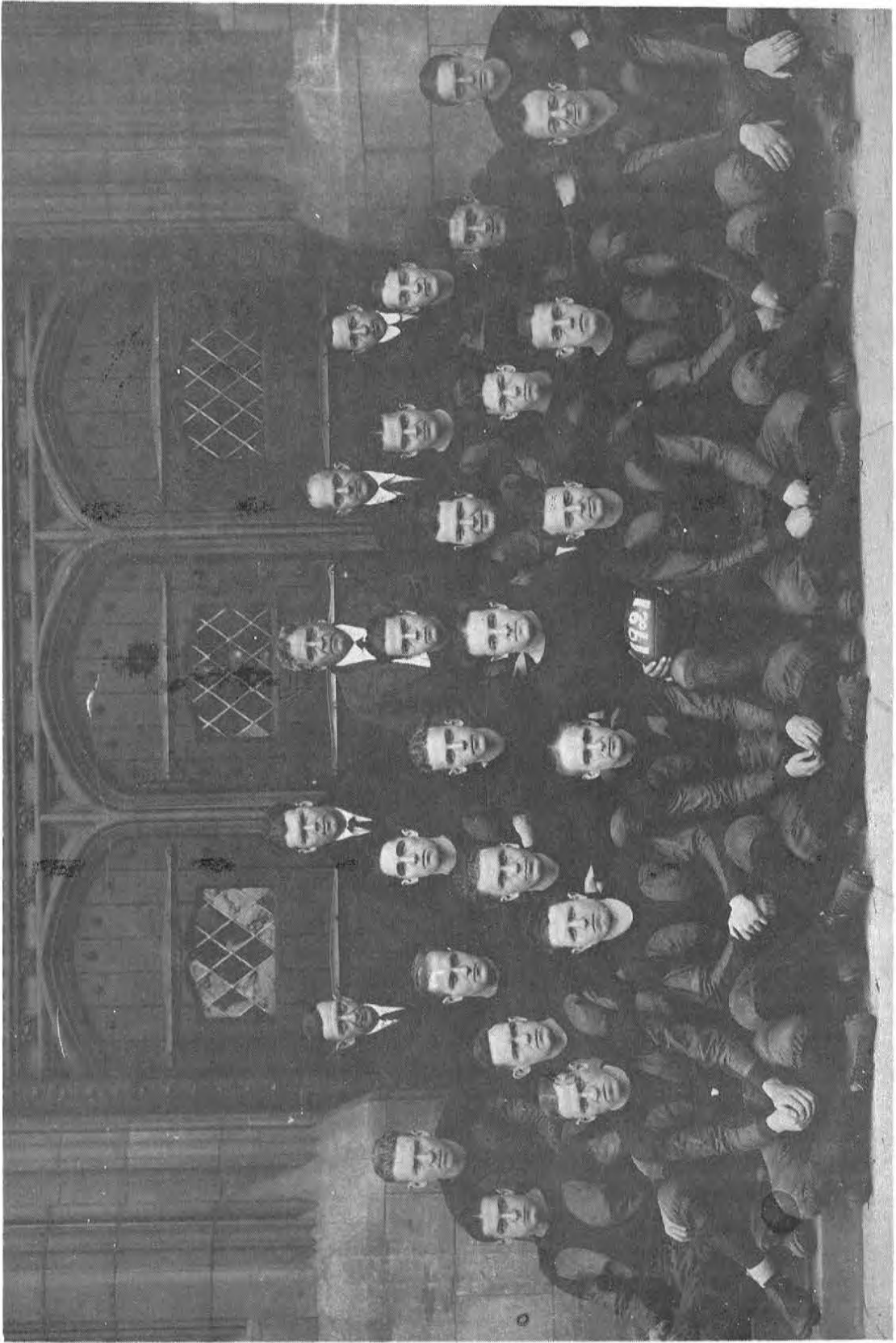
was so thick that they walked right out of their shoes," laughed Bill.

Chicago kicked off to Illinois and Britton immediately punted back. The Maroons then began their old tactics of hammering at the line. Zorn, Thomas, Zorn, Thomas, with an occasional change of booming punts. The first quarter play took place in Illinois territory. Bill Zorn was a regular battering ram and ripped the Illini line for huge gains. The Fighting Illini had a terrific punter in Earl Britton, who kept them out of trouble most of the time.

One of the close calls came in the early part of the game when Red Grange intercepted a pass and tore loose for a sprint of nearly 65 yards before Jim Pyott caught him from behind. The tide of the battle turned for Illinois when Chicago battled their way down to the seven yard line only to be stopped. John Thomas was given the ball, similar to the Princeton game and he was unable to put it over the goal line.

At the beginning of the second period, Chicago stubbornly held on the 23 yard marker and punted back to mid-field. As the game wore on Grange began to reel off good gains, a thirty-five yard flashy run to the Maroons 35-yard stripe. Britton tried a place kick from the 44-yard line, but the attempt fell short. The gun sounded for the half with score board still bare.

About half-way through the third quarter the Illini started on their own 37-yard line and alternating between McIllwain and Grange, they carried the ball deep into Maroon country. Then it "The



Galloping Ghost" kicked up his heels and cut loose for a TD. The ball was called back to where he had side-stepped out of bounds. The next play he stepped through the line for the score again. Britton kicked the goal and the period ended 7-0 in favor of the Fighting Illini.

During the last quarter Chicago tried desperately to score by passing, all of which fell short. As the last gun sounded the combination of Grange and Britton were the difference. Red's excellent open field running and line plunging as well as his defensive work was indicative of his unparalleled value to the Illinois team.

The headlines of the Chicago paper read like this: GRANGE'S SUPER-PLAYING DOWNS MAROONS. GRANGE AND ZORN STAND OUT —Both players look like All-Western Candidates—Bill Zorn has been playing a bangup game all season for the Chicago Maroons, but Saturday saw him at his best, and he must be considered for laurals. If

he had been called on in the first quarter for that needed yard, when his team was in a position to score by having four downs to make six yards; Zorn undoubtedly would have made it, the way he was going. This looked like a bad blunder on Abbot's part in calling on John Thomas instead of Zorn at this crucial stage. In any case, the Maroons can be proud of their work against the greatest Illini combination that Chicago has ever met.

And so Willis "Big Bill" Zorn graduated from The University of Chicago and graduated from playing for the Maroons of StaggField. One of the many passages Amos Alonzo Stagg left with full-back Zorn was this: "I will never consent to select an All-American team or candidate for one. The individual is only part of the whole. It's the combined labors of players and coaches that produce results."

(Next Month Willis Zorn Becomes a Coach)



1909



1911



1916



1909



1911



1920