RIFF, RAM, BAH, ZOO!

FOOTBALL COMES TO TCU

EZRA HOOD

With a Foreword by Coach Gary Patterson

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TCU football has a long and proud heritage, and all TCU fans will appreciate *Riff, Ram, Bah, Zoo! Football Comes to TCU*, a rich sports history that chronicles this great legacy. Written by TCU alum Ezra Hood and published by TCU Press, *Riff, Ram, Bah, Zoo!* tells the story of TCU football’s first two lively decades, when playing fields were often uneven and rules were sometimes irregular. Although the spirit of the game and the passion of the players haven’t changed, the sport certainly has. Without the sophisticated gear of today, TCU’s earliest players competed in hand-sewn uniforms, leather helmets, and nose guards on rocky, hard-packed ground with sketchy boundaries, no end zones, and more than a few horned frogs. There were no forward passes, and in the pile of bodies that often ended each play, fans could only distinguish their team from the opponent’s by the color of the players’ socks. Yet despite opposition from within and without, TCU created its football program in 1896 at a time when many still questioned the value of the new sport. TCU fielded its teams by any means—usually on the first day of the fall semester, when the coaches found out who had shown up to play—or to learn how to play. Since those early years TCU’s players and coaches, with the support of thousands of fans, have proudly carried the sport of football forward, earning respect for over a century.

The importance of tradition to our football program cannot be overstated. From the achievements of the “Boys from the Heights” in the team’s first year to the triumphs of the team entering the Southwest Conference in 1922, TCU football set the foundation for its gridiron success. I am proud to build on the foundation these coaches and players established one hundred and twenty years ago. I think they would also be proud if they could see all that has been accomplished over the last twelve years. Now the football program is the “front porch” of a great and growing university.

—Coach Gary Patterson, August 2013
Writing about football and about TCU at the turn of the last century is to cope with erasures. Custom all but erased the first names of many players, who were identified only by their last names in most contemporary accounts. I have been able to fill in most of the players’ names from the lettermen lists and other sources. But in too many instances the only mention of a player here will be his last name. Perhaps the publication of this book will prompt more of these early players’ names and stories to resurface.

Progress erases the setting of many of these stories. Carroll Field now sits under a Baylor University administrative building; West End Park is now a Waco junkyard. It is difficult even for the imaginative to hear the calls and crowds of the games described in these pages when standing in these lots today, generations removed from the bucks and tackles of yesteryear.

But most of all, time erases. In an institution as self-aware as TCU, the fact that the memory of its earliest coaches, games, and players could fade is a testament to the eroding vigor of time. This work grew largely from my curiosity to rediscover the TCU football stories time had erased.

My efforts would not have made it into print without the cooperative effort and sacrifice of many others. This book’s journey from harebrained idea to these printed pages was blessed—and occasionally cursed—by many. Of course my editors, Klay Kubiak and Kathy Walton, labored with me to find a printable book amid my manuscripts. The TCU Press gambled on me, and I hope your copy of the book helps them win that gamble. My readers gave valuable feedback early on, and my friends suffered (and suffer!) through my incessant discoveries of arcane trivia about TCU football.

A particular thanks goes to Lisa Pena and Susan Swain of Special Collections in the Mary Couts Burnett Library at TCU. They were an invaluable help in rounding up images for this book.

But mostly I want to leave a public thanks on this page for my dear wife and fellow Horned Frog, Shannon, who spent many a widow’s evening during the years I labored on this project, somehow never complaining.

Ezra Hood
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TCU: THE BEGINNINGS
The town of Fort Worth, Texas, began in 1849 as a frontier fort that was abandoned by the army four years later, in favor of an outpost farther west. Some of the soldiers stayed behind to settle in the little village that had depended on the fort, including Francis Knaar, a blacksmith, and Louis Wetmore, who cut the fort’s first street through waist-high grass. Surprisingly, the village survived, and by 1869, Fort Worth had a stone courthouse surrounded by a grocer, butcher, hardware store, three drugstores, a brickyard, a ferry, a mill, saddlery, cabinet shop, two blacksmith shops, two hotels, a wagon yard, several mercantiles, a law firm, a Masonic Lodge, and a shoe shop. In town, sunflowers grew “as tall as a mule’s back,” and razorback hogs ran openly in the streets, fighting with dogs and breeding flies.\footnote{Wolves threatened settlers in the early days; as late as 1905 wolf hunts were still attracting hunters—including Teddy Roosevelt—from the East. After the Civil War, the town’s school was held in Masonic Lodge Number 148, whose floors had been ripped up to build looms during the war. The building was repaired with lumber that Major Khleber Miller Van Zandt (who had once worked in Abraham Lincoln’s law office) and three others had bought for a load of flour.

Captain John Hanna—an ex-Confederate soldier and lawyer—and Carl Vincent taught at the school after the war, drawing students from surrounding counties, as well as from Fort Worth. In 1868, Hanna quit teaching in order to resume his law practice, and Colonel John Peter Smith, who had started a school in 1854, returned to teaching after serving in the Confederate Army. He hired a newlywed schoolteacher from Carlton College in Bonham—the son of Fort Worth Postmaster Joseph Addison Clark. Like John Hanna before him, Smith also retired from teaching so that he could resume his law practice.

Hiring Addison Clark to teach in Fort Worth was something of a coup—the young teacher was more of a scholar than one would expect in as rough a place as Fort Worth. He was the brightest pupil in a family of scholars. After exhausting what education was available to him in Texas, he taught himself Hebrew and Greek. While campaigning with the Confederate Army, Addison read Byron, the Bible, and a work on higher mathematics translated from French. Upon returning from the war, Addison and his brother Randolph, who were very close, went to Bonham and studied with Charles Carlton, who had studied with Alexander Campbell
in England. Addison married Carlton's niece, Sally McQuigg; Randolph married a cousin once removed of Robert E. Lee named Ella Branch Lee. Many of the Clarks were teachers, and eventually both Joseph and his wife, as well as four other children, including Randolph, taught with Addison in the Clarks' school. When Addison and Sally had their first child, a son born in 1870, they named him Adran (also spelled Add Ran) Clark—to honor both the father and the uncle.

Addison was an unrepentant Southerner who refused to take the ironclad oath, but got a teaching certificate anyway. He was also a devout Christian whose devotion to Biblical Christianity soon got him into trouble in Fort Worth. The Masons objected to Clark's preaching in their building on Sundays. When they threatened to oust the school and its preachy schoolmaster, Van Zandt and others bought a lot nearby for $200 and built a forty- by thirty-foot brick building for the school and church. Whether by custom, or foresight, or both, they built a stout fence around the lot, which saved many of the school children from a cattle stampede following an annual May Day picnic. The picnickers heard the cattle coming, and those with carts and buggies rode out of the way. Joseph Clark led the rest—mostly children—back to the school and helped the kids over the fence. One of the cowboys saved Joseph from the stampede by scooping up the teacher and fastening him by his clothes to the saddle horn.

The Clarks' school soon outgrew its two-room schoolhouse. Major Van Zandt and Judge Terry bought a lot on Fourth Street between Houston and Main and gave it to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), whose congregants built on it a new building to house both their church and their school. Ida Van Zandt Jarvis boarded female students of the school at her home—the first boarding for female students in Tarrant County.

By 1870, Tarrant County had almost six thousand inhabitants and over sixteen thousand acres under cultivation, primarily for wheat and cotton. And the cattle trade, which Monroe Choate, J. J. Myers, and J. L. Driskell had largely driven away from Dallas, was transforming the town of Fort Worth. A Kentucky paper editorialized, “Fort Worth is a shabby village on a small river not over ankle deep. . . . The country is sparsely settled, dwellings are five miles apart. But in two years it will be twice the size of Lexington. Fort Worth has a population of two thousand inhabitants. It is having unrivaled growth and ere long will surpass Richmond, Virginia, in population growth.”

By the 1870s, Fort Worth not only had rosy prospects, but a reputation as well. Drovers' herds down the Chisholm Trail would take over an hour to pass through town, unless the cowboys settled down for a few days to enjoy city life in “Hell's Half Acre,” a cluster of saloons, gambling houses, and other establishments of ill repute that were uncomfortably close to the Clarks' school and church. The deterioration of the neighbor-
hood accelerated in 1872, when the Texas and Pacific Railroad contracted to build a railroad from San Diego to East Texas, prompting an influx of newcomers, a building boom, and speculation in real estate.

The situation quickly grew intolerable for the Clarks. Only months after Fort Worth was incorporated as a city, Addison went away for the summer to preach and to look for a new site for the school. Meanwhile, Randolph received an offer from Pleasant Thorp to relocate the school to the sleepy environs of Thorp Spring, a couple of miles outside of Granbury. The area charmed Randolph, and he convinced Joseph and Addison to move their school to Thorp Spring. The three hoped to be able to pay for the school from the proceeds of their Fort Worth homes, which had continued to rise in value until the bubble burst in the Panic of 1873. Little Add Ran, however, had recently died of diphtheria, and Sallie Clark did not wish to move away from her son's grave. She eventually relented when the three men—Joseph, Addison, and Randolph—promised her that they would name the school after the child.

The first session of the “Add Ran” school opened with thirteen pupils from nearby towns. Despite speculation by the locals that it would not last a full term, the little school steadily grew. The Christian Church endorsed the school in December 1873. The Clarks applied for and won a charter from the State of Texas in April 1874, under the name Add Ran Male and Female College, called simply “Add Ran College” for short. By the close of the spring term in 1874, seventy-five students from several counties were enrolled. Primary grade students paid two dollars monthly; intermediate grade students paid three to four dollars monthly, and college students...
paid five dollars monthly. Add Ran’s first graduates were J. E. Jarrott and Edwin Milwee, in June 1876. Enrollment reached two hundred in that year, and leveled out at about four hundred students by the 1881-82 school year.

The school had a democratic and chivalrous character. Unlike women, male students were required to work a certain amount; to wait on themselves, draw their own water, and tend their own fires. The academic atmosphere was not stifling: one student nearly convinced Addison Clark to believe in the theory of evolution. Years later, Clark and his wife laughed long and loud when recalling the debate. Some professors were hardly any older than their students. One professor, Ben Parks, came promptly when told a student named Miss Wade wished to speak to him at study hall. There he found a gleeful crowd of students waiting to see him blush, but no Miss Wade. Parks and Wade later married.

The students housed ad hoc among locals. They came from Texas primarily, mostly from nearby counties, although by 1890 the students hailed from eighty-two counties and six other states. Add Ran College built a girls’ dorm in 1883, and by 1888 several “cottages” were erected on the grounds to house students.

Thorp Spring treated the fledgling college well enough to ward off advances from Fort Worth, which wanted the school back. Five years after the Panic of ’73 the economy was still depressed, and Mr. Thorp agreed to cancel the Clarks’ promissory notes, which the teachers could not pay. In return, they gave Thorp ownership of the building that housed the school, and for a time the school paid rent.

Although the prestige of the school grew, it continued to face financial struggles, and in September of 1889 the Clarks turned over ownership of the school to the Christian Churches of Texas. The administration remained with the family, but the board of trustees now came from the Church, which secured a new charter from the state in October, changing the name of the school to “Add Ran Christian College.” The school added its first graduate degree, a Masters of Arts, in 1891.

Four years later, Add Ran would move again, farther south to Waco, in the heart of Texas cotton country. Waco had attracted immigration from Europe and the war-torn South, and by 1889 it had a population exceeding fourteen thousand. It began predominantly as a Methodist town, the Methodists having formed Waco’s first church in 1851. The Baptist Mission Board, which at first did not consider Waco promising enough to send a missionary, reversed course and supported a missionary beginning in 1851. That year, Judge Baylor preached the first Baptist sermon in the town, renting the church from the Methodists; the Baptists would have their own building by 1857. The two denominations cooperated to form a boys’ high school called Trinity College. The Methodists looked out for
their girls, too, and founded the Methodist Female College. The curriculum focused on music recitals and elocution, and the administrators punished inappropriate contact between the sexes by forcing miscreants to drink castor oil.

Trinity College rebranded as Waco University in 1861, and in 1866 the Baptist General Association of Texas decided to move its fledgling institution, Baylor University, to Waco and consolidate it with Waco University. With the arrival of Baylor in 1866, Waco became more Baptist than Methodist. Despite the competition the Methodist Female College prospered for a few years, eventually changing its name to Waco Female College. But while Baylor University flourished, Waco Female College floundered, and its building was seized by a creditor in 1890.

The Christian Church was late to the scene in Waco, but by late 1895 a collection of Wacoans, headed by the Waco Christian Church and Waco Commercial Club, approached Add Ran Christian College. They offered to buy the former Waco Female College building and give it to Add Ran if Add Ran would move to Waco. The College agreed—over Addison Clark’s objections—and near Christmas Day 1895, the professors and students, including Addison Clark, traveled to Waco together and formed a procession down the street from the Waco train station to a formal welcoming ceremony at the First Baptist Church, where Baylor University’s president gave one of the welcoming speeches.
The sport of football began to establish itself in Texas in the 1890s. Mark F. Bernstein described American sport following the Civil War:

American sport at the end of the Civil War was heavily stratified by class. The wealthy followed horse racing and cricket, while boxing and later baseball appealed more to a working-class audience. [Joseph] Pulitzer had initially scorned football as a game for rich college boys, but by the early 1890s had come to appreciate its broader appeal. Football, especially at the prominent Ivy colleges, played to both highbrow and lowbrow audiences.

Football developed out of a version of English Rugby—Rugby being the name of a school—and appeared at undergraduate rushes at Yale about the time white settlers began settling along the Brazos and Trinity Rivers in Central and North Texas. The games were violent, as described by one witness of early football strategy: “The main object of this game was the elimination of the opponent by constantly kicking him on the shins until he was forced to retire from the game.” Faculties routinely banned football games, but the sport’s appeal outran the academics’ opposition.

In 1874, the Harvard team played the McGill University team in Montreal using traditional rugby rules, which allowed players to run with the ball, making movement down the field considerably easier. The Americans discovered that they liked the Canadian rules very much, so the Crimson brought their enthusiasm for rugby-style football back to the States and convinced Yale (despite beating them handily) to adopt the new rules. Walter Camp, a Yale man, became obsessed with the new version of the sport, which by 1876 was still a simple series of coordinated headlong rushes (called “fairs”) into an equally headlong defensive pile called “scrimmages.” That year student representatives from Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and the University of Pennsylvania met in Springfield, Massachusetts, to settle on some common rules for the game. They adopted the Canadian rules for running with the ball and tackling—above the waist only.

Four years later, representatives from Yale, Rutgers, Princeton, and Columbia met to form the first intercollegiate association in the nation and to revise rules for the game yet again. They adopted Camp’s proposal that changed the rugby-style scrum to a cleaner line of scrimmage, with the ball being put in play by a player’s foot into the hands of a player in a newly-created position—the “quarter-back”—instead of being tossed into a scrum by the referee. Creating the line of scrimmage separated American football from rugby. For fostering this change, and for nurturing football in its early years, Walter Camp is considered the father of football. Camp
started publishing an annual guide to football in the mid–1880s, and be-
gan choosing an all-American team every year starting in 1888, focusing
first on Ivy League players but soon traveling the country to observe nota-
ble players elsewhere.

Playing with a line of scrimmage but without a minimum yardage
requirement for downs created perverse incentives. These incentives ru-
ined a championship game between Yale and Princeton in 1881. Both
teams were aiming for a tie, because each considered itself the defending
champion. Princeton held the ball for the entire first half, simply moving
backwards on each snap, repeatedly netting touchbacks. Yale repeated
the feat in the second half. This misfire of the rules prompted a third rules
convention in 1882, where the Canadian system of downs was adopted for
the American game. Teams now had to move the ball forward five yards in
three downs.

Scoring was imprecise until 1882, when numerical values were as-
signed to various kinds of plays: five points for field goals, four for touch-
downs, and two for kicks after touchdowns.

Blocking for the ball carrier (then called “interference”) became legal
in 1888, as did tackling below the waist. These changes encouraged the
closely bunched formations in midfield that still characterized early foot-
ball. Because linemen were not required to play at the line of scrimmage,
blocking for the ball carrier could be taken to extremes with wedge plays.
For the infamous “Flying Wedge” play, the center would begin alone at the
line of scrimmage, snapping the ball back ten or twenty yards to the rest
of his team, which was bunched together and already running towards the
defense. The play must have been terrifying; occasionally it was lethal.
The Flying Wedge was specifically outlawed in 1894 with the restriction

“A thud of bodies,” from the Horned Frog (yearbook) of 1907.
that only two players could be in motion in the backfield before the snap. It lived on, however, in subtle variations called “guards back,” “tackles back,” and “mass on tackle” plays. In these “mass plays,” linemen would line up in the backfield and then attempt to pull or push the ball carrier through the defensive line.

In the 1880s, conferences of colleges emerged to combat the expense and violence of the game, and also to prevent the use of “tramp” athletes who would play on the team—sometimes just for the big Thanksgiving game—but not attend class or even enroll in school. The 1880s also saw football begin to spread westward as students who saw or played the game at Ivy League schools went to schools in other parts of the country. The newer teams usually played without a coach and with little more guidance than Walter Camp’s *Annual Guide*.

Most prominent in this westward drift was Amos Alonzo Stagg, an all-American at Yale, who was recruited by the founder of the University of Chicago in 1892 to attend the university, establish the athletic department, and forge a football team. (About a decade later A. C. Easley brought a rulebook to Add Ran from Alonzo Stagg; it was probably a recent edition of Camp’s *Annual Guide*.) In 1890 there was enough student interest in the sport in the West for the formation of the Western Intercollegiate Football Association.

**FOOTBALL COMES TO TEXAS**

By the 1890s, football reached Texas. City teams appeared first: Dallas and Fort Worth both had teams that played in 1891 before several hundred spectators. Fort Worth’s first team, called the “Heavyweights,” began play in 1890. Austin College and Texas A&M each organized football teams, only to disband them by 1895 after only two “seasons” of intercollegiate play. Only the University of Texas’s team, which played as early as 1891, managed a continuous existence into the twentieth century. Fort Worth University and Polytechnic University both were playing intramural contests in 1892, but they were not playing against each other.

It is not known whether any students from the Add Ran Christian College traveled to Dallas from Thorp Spring in November of 1893 to witness the game between the heralded Dallas Foot Ball Club and a student team from the University of Texas—or perhaps to witness a bicyclist’s attempts to break three cycling records during halftime. The team at the University of Texas had agreed to play the Dallas Foot Ball Club in 1892, but backed out of the agreement by telegram the day before the game, giving the excuse that the team couldn’t sacrifice its preparations for its college field day. The UT team agreed again to play the Dallas team in
1893 for a guarantee of $200. Its ball burst in one practice scrimmage for the contest, and the players had to wait while a student bicycled into town to buy another one.

The match was held on November 11, 1893, in front of about two thousand onlookers. The sport that the spectators came to watch only resembled modern football. The largest player on either team weighed 210 pounds. During halftime, while the competitive cyclist tried to break the records, the referee quit because the Dallas team complained so much. A spectator who was a member of the Fort Worth club filled in as referee for the second half. The students prevailed, handing the Dallas team its first-ever loss.

The sport was already positioning itself as the primary identifier of colleges. The Princeton-Yale game on Thanksgiving of 1893 was as big a spectacle of sport and school pride as any game in our day. By 1902, TCU’s *Skiff* could proclaim, “Football to a large extent is the criterion by which one institution measures another. To lose means discredit. To win means to command the respect not only of other schools but outsiders also.”

Even though rapid maturation and major rule changes from 1906 to 1912 were yet to come, a humorous 1904 essay in the *Skiff* already carries the familiar flavor of the game. It depicts a frustrated fan trying to explain the sport to his date:

“O, no, no, no, no, no; you haven’t got it at all. The fullback is sometimes built that way, but the term is not used to describe figure. They call him the fullback to distinguish his position from that of the halfbacks.”

“Oh!” she exclaimed. “In that case I should [think] they would call him the whole back. That would sound better, don’t you think? But never mind: I suppose I must not be too critical about terms when there is so much that I want to learn. It’s a combination game, isn’t it?”

“Combination of what?” he asked.

“Why, of football and handball, of course.”

“Oh, no, no, no, no, no,” he said, wearily.

“Then why do they take the ball in their hands?” she demanded.

“To carry it,” he exclaimed.

“But, if it’s football,” she urged, “I should think they would have to carry it with their feet. How far do they have to carry it?”

“As far as they can. You see, the distance is marked by lines.”

“O, yes; now I understand!” she cried, delightedly.
“I’ve heard you talk of five-yard lines and ten-yard lines and all that, and of course that’s the way you score. Five yards count five, and so on. I’ve often wondered why there were such big scores in football.”

There were many people laughing by this time, but the young man could only say, wearily, “O, no, no, no, no; you don’t get it at all.”

“It’s awfully complicated, don’t you think?” she sighed, “but I’ll get it all right after a while. I’m sure I’m beginning to understand it. Now, which of those long white lines is the rush line?

“I told you once,” he replied, “that those were the five-yard lines. The rush line is composed of players.”

“How foolish of me,” she said. “I ought to have remembered that. Now, where is the left tackle?”

The young man pointed to the player in that position.

“Oh!” she exclaimed, disappointed. “I thought tackle was rigging, or rope, or something like fishing tackle, you know. . . .”

“Mabel,” said the youth, at last, “Don’t ask me anything more about football.”

**VOLUNTEER COACHES, GREEN PLAYERS**