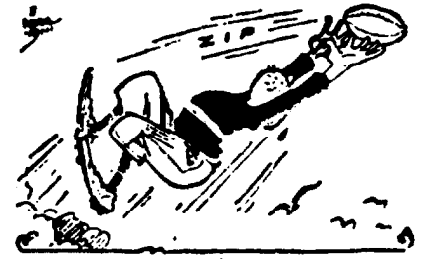

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Lone Star Dietz

By John C. Hibner

William Henry Dietz was probably one of the most remarkable and interesting characters that ever entered the field of coaching college or professional football. His mother was called Julia One-Star, a half-blood Oglala Sioux Indian, and his father, William Dietz, was a German civil engineer. The boy was born in 1885 and he was named "Wicarhpi Isnala", or "Lone Star".

Lone Star was sent east by his father to attend school when he was 8 years old. Despite the handicap of learning the english language, he graduated from high school when he was eighteen. After high school he enrolled as a special student at Macalaster College in St Paul, Minnesota in the fall of 1903, where he devoted all of his time to the study of art, but he also played a little football too!

He left school to enter Chilocco Indian School in Oklahoma in 1904. It wasn't this young Sioux's artistic talent however, but his potential as an athlete that brought him there. The school was expanding its football program from the intramural level to the intercollegiate level. The superintendent of Chilocco, S.M. McCowan, recruited Dietz because he thought the powerful Sioux could make Chilocco's football team into a winner.

In St Louis during the summer of 1904, Dietz met Angel DeCora, who was considered one of the best-educated Indians in the country. She was also one of the leading writers and illustrators for Harpers Weekly. Soon Lone Star became her star pupil, her teaching assistant, and her husband.

At the Carlisle Indian School in 1905, a new department was founded by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Francis E. Leupp. The new department was called the "Department of Native Indian Art", and Leupp sought the best Indian artists he could find. The quest led him to Angel DeCora, who accepted the challenging job.

Lone Star Dietz enrolled at the Philadelphia School of Industrial Arts and spent a year studying there, and in 1907 he finally enrolled at Carlisle where he had a dual role of student and assistant teacher in the Native Indian Art Department. Perhaps Lone Star, with the support of his wife, might have gained some measure of future fame as an illustrator of Indian stories, had he not had a career in football.

Dietz had a very strong desire to play football under the much-loved coach Glenn S. "Pop" Warner, one of the most innovative and thorough coaches the game has ever known. Some of his best Indian players had never seen a football before coming to Carlisle, and he taught them well to perform remark-

able feats. Lone Star was 22 years old when he first played for Pop in 1907 and earned the block letter "C".

During Lone Star's last season in 1911 he was the team's star offensive tackle. But he also played offensive halfback alongside Jim Thorpe the greatest all-around athlete of his time. As it turned out, 1911 was a great year for Warner and his players. They scored 298 points while yielding only 49, and they won eleven of twelve games, beating such major teams as Brown, Harvard, Pennsylvania and Pittsburgh, while losing only to Syracuse by one point. Walter Camp selected Thorpe for his All-American team in 1911, but Lone Star missed that honor.



Willam 'Lone Star' Dietz

held them scoreless, and pushed over two touchdowns of their own to win the game 14-0.

Dietz coached two more years at Pullman, and during that time his teams only lost two games. When World War I came, Washington State temporarily abandoned football, but Lone Star was hired to coach the football team of the U.S. Marines at Mare Island for two seasons (1918 and 1919). In those two seasons his teams only lost three games, one of the losses coming to Great Lakes in his second appearance as a coach in the annual New Year's game in Pasadena.

Lone Star may have played pro football in Indiana during the fall of 1920. That was also the last year away from his off-season employment as a teacher at the Pennsylvania School of Industrial Arts. In 1921 he suffered his first losing season as head coach with a 1-6 record at Purdue University.

Warner retained Dietz as his assistant during the seasons of 1912 through 1914, and during the off-season Lone Star taught Design at the School of Applied Art in Philadelphia. In 1915, Warner left Carlisle for a very large salary and he wanted Lone Star to follow him to Pittsburgh. However, Dietz wanted his own head coaching job and, highly recommended by Warner, he obtained the head position at Washington State College in the Northwest.

When Coach Dietz arrived on the Pullman, Washington campus, he was dressed in a top hat, purple waistcoat and spats, and it was very difficult for the students and faculty to believe that this person was their new football coach. But Dietz drove his charges hard, and they learned to respect his coaching ability. They defeated Oregon 28-3 in the season opener, then continued over the Oregon Aggies, Idaho, Montana, Whitman and Gonzaga, and finished with an undefeated season in which opponents only scored ten points.

This impressive record won the Cougars an invitation to represent the West in a post season game against Brown University, to be played on New Year's Day in conjunction with the Tournament of Roses-in Pasadena. The Brown team, led by their Negro All-American back Fritz Pollard, outweighed their western foes and were favorites to win. But the Cougars

During the next five years Dietz was head coach at Louisiana Polytechnic Institute (1922-23) and Wyoming University (1924-26). His teams played but two losing seasons during this time, those being 1924 and 1926 at Wyoming.

In 1926 an old friend called on Dietz to help him in a project. It was his old coach Pop Warner, then the head mentor at Stanford. So Dietz went back to his drawing board and created more than forty pen-and-ink illustrations for Warner's new book. It was to be published in the spring of 1927 by the Stanford University Press and was entitled "**Football for Coaches and Players". Warner identified his illustrator in the book as a former player and assistant at the Carlisle Indian School and wrote these words: "He has since had a very successful coaching career. He is not only a capable football coach, but an artist as well." Warner's nice words may have induced Dietz to join him at Stanford as his freshman coach in the fall of 1927. Again Dietz produced a winning team, finishing with a 5-1 record.

In 1928 he kept his hand in the coaching field by going to the Southern part of California where he coached a group of former collegiate players. The name of the team was the Los Angeles Town Club, and their record was 10-0-0.

From 1929 to 1932 Dietz coached at Haskell Institute in Lawrence, Kansas, where he had four winning seasons before his toughest coaching job beckoned him. George Preston Marshall, owner of the Boston Braves, persuaded him to become the head coach of his professional team in the National-Football League. Soon after Dietz became coach, the team's name was changed to the "Redskins". That was four years before the franchise was moved to the nation's capital to become the Washington Redskins. In 1933, Boston had a 5-5-1 record and Cliff Battles, his star halfback, led the league in rushing. In 1934 the Redskins had a record of 6-6-0, which didn't sit well with Marshall and his ambition of having a league championship. Marshall replaced Dietz with Eddie Casey, a former Harvard star, who had a very dismal record of 2-7-1 for the 1935 season.

An aging Pop Warner welcomed his former tackle to his coaching staff again in 1935. By now he was the head coach at Temple University in Philadelphia, where Warner gave Dietz the freshman coaching assignment. Under Dietz the Temple frosh played unbeaten seasons in 1935 and 1936, only a single tie marring a perfect record. In 1937 Albright College offered Dietz the head coaching job, and in the first year under him the Albright team was unbeaten for the first time in the history of the school. Their star back, Dick Rittle, was selected for the Little All-American team for small colleges. Dietz would coach there until World War II compelled Albright to abandon football temporarily in 1943.

Expressing more of his talents, Dietz went to work for a New York advertising agency where he remained for about four years. But his real love was painting now, and he moved back to Albright where he sought to earn a living by painting. Among his works are portraits of well-known professors and men who had played prominent roles in the academic life and athletics at Albright College.

William "Lone Star" Dietz was almost 80 years old when he died of cancer at St. Joseph's Hospital in Reading, Pennsylvania on July 20, 1964. Lengthy obituaries appeared in many of the local papers. During 27 years of coaching college, clubs, service teams and professional football, his teams won more than 75% of their games. Six of his teams were undefeated, while only four had losing seasons, and a "coach" of honor and distinction he surely was.

I think there is one way to describe Dietz's impact on people and his contributions to the game of football and to our times. When he passed away the Varsity Club of Albright College purchased the burial plot in Schwartzwald Cemetery in nearby Jacksonwald, and erected his gravestone, which carries the words:

WILLIAM DIETZ
"Lone Star"
August 16, 1885
July 20, 1964
"COACH"