

A CFHS Editorial

In the last two editions of "Sideline Chatter" the issue was raised concerning what constitutes true "research" in the area of college football. As the College Football Historical Society enters its second year, the editors of your Journal felt this would be an excellent time to review our philosophy on this topic.

The history of college football offers the dedicated researcher virgin territory ripe for exploitation. Pitifully little about the sport has been detailed in books. And it can be stated books are most responsible for perpetuating and compounding errors and myths concerning the game.

The primary mission of CFHS is to promote comprehensive research, expanding the documented history of college football.

The editors believe CFHS members want all the facts, including game-by-game reviews, original statistical material, and "inside" info which can be obtained only from newspapers of the day. Information gained direct from players involved, while vital to any research project, can be flawed by the passage of time. Even college guides contain errors and omissions. Some guides pretend certain games never happened, while the truth is the game was played and viewed by a ticket-buying audience. Errors also exist in college guides concerning statistics, which the NCAA office must take responsibility for.

In addition to presenting season reviews of teams and players during its first year of publication, the CFHS Journal contained biographical articles and reviews of single games or events, in far greater detail than has ever appeared before in book form. And the editors will continue to present material previously published elsewhere if it contains original research or information and appeared in a limited-circulation newspaper or magazine. The New York Times does not count as a limited-circulation publication.

CFHS welcomes articles even on the likes of Red Grange and Jim Thorpe, if the articles contain original material. The editors are more interested, however, in the many outstanding performers little is known about, such as Shipwreck Kelly or Walter Steffen or Mayes McLain. Kelly was one of the most famous players of his day, yet received no All-America recognition. Steffen was a phenomenal player who did gain All-America status. McLain, a much-travelled gridder, set an incredible single-season scoring record. How many fans of the sport can cite more than one or two games involving these great players, or hundreds of other "forgotten" players and teams? Too many fans of college football base their knowledge of the game solely on limited material presented in books, All-America lists and team ratings.

The knowledge gap in college football can be closed only by dedicated researchers willing to risk eye damage by squinting at old newspapers on microfilm at their local library.

✿✿ We always need new members for the Society. Also, send any comments or ideas you have to: Ray Schmidt, 24 Rockbluff Way, Lockport, Ill, 60441