

Ringers Three: The Ironton Tanks versus the Portsmouth Smoke House, 1921

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In 1923, addressing an open letter to “all friends of college football,” Amos Alonzo Stagg, the renowned college football coach, warned his readers that “Sunday professional football” threatened the welfare of the intercollegiate game.¹ As men in his game had long argued, he believed the “amateur spirit” produced “elements for the development of character and manhood” that the cash nexus contaminated football by its invitation to gambling and fling of games. He had in mind the professional teams that had recently “sprung up” bidding for college players to capitalize on their ability, the name of their colleges, and the “noised abroad mystery of their presence.”

Stagg was referring, of course, to “ringers” when he railed against the “mystery of their presence.” Ringers were the men who played for semiprofessional and professional teams under assumed names to conceal their identities. They came onto the field out of varying circumstances and for various reasons. Managers and rampant boosters of teams, resolving to win for pride in the team or its community, employed ringers. They knew, too, that whispers around a town about a prospective ringer might increase attendance for a game. They used ringers to gain an edge in wagering on a game. According to one historian, the “citizens of one small town’ might “bet their collective arm” that their team “could knock ‘hell’ out of the eleven from some other Podunk” and so were willing to pay a good player or two to train in for a big game.² Collegians wishing to preserve their eligibility played under assumed names, as did college and high school coaches seeking to escape the wrath of administrators who disapproved of semiprofessional football.

Certainly ringers were a staple of semiprofessional football. At the very dawning of the game in western Pennsylvania in the early 1890s, A. C. Read, captain of the Penn State football team, played as “Stayer” for the Pittsburgh Athletic Club against the Allegheny Athletic Club.³ Early in the new century in northeastern Ohio, then the principal locus of the paid game, ringers were commonplace. George “Peggy” Parrot, a star back for Case University, played on more than one occasion as “Jimmy Murphy” for the Shelby Blues. In 1915 and 1917, Earle “Greasy” Neale, coach of the West Virginia Wesleyan football team, and John Kellison, a tackle on the Wesleyan eleven, became “Fisher,” “Foster,” and “Ketchum” for the Canton Bulldogs. At about the same time, Frederick Stanley Sefton, the athletic director of the Akron Municipal University, used four different aliases playing for three semiprofessional teams in Akron. In his diatribe against professional football, Stagg specifically noted the notorious and wholesale use of ringers that occurred in 1921 when a team from Carlinville, Illinois, employed ten Notre Dame men to play against the eleven from Taylorville, Illinois, which had nine regulars from the University of Illinois in its lineup. Supposedly, each community bet \$50,000 on the game.⁴ These men received a fixed stipend for their play, but usually semiprofessional players earned but a share of the gate after their team covered its expenses.⁵

Small-town America was especially receptive to the use of ringers. In eclipse for several decades before 1920 as the nation became increasingly urbanized, boosters there—notably journalists—looked for signs of progress, of civic improvement, and might have counted the advent of a successful football team as



“The Ironton Tanks, 1922” (“Shorty” Davies is standing at the far left in the top row; “Bill” Brooks, is sitting at the far left in the bottom row). Photo courtesy of Lawrence County (Ohio)

evidence of their community's intrinsic worth even if out-of-town players had something to do with the scoring of touchdowns.⁶ Along with managers and coaches of teams, men in print ignored an ethos that called on indigenous local talent to give pride to the community. More than that, they contradicted the culture of the small community, which was infixed with face-to-face relations, personalism, and informality. They were akin, perhaps, to Sinclair Lewis's George Babbitt, who littered Main Street with boosterism, localism, and materialism. So they appeared at Ironton, Ohio, in 1921 when the Tanks of that city played the Smoke House eleven of Portsmouth, Ohio.

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The teams played in the name of two communities in southern Ohio on the Ohio River. Ironton, a city of about 14,000, was the center of the regional pig-iron industry. Downriver about thirty miles, Portsmouth, its population around 33,000, was the scene of a substantial industry in steel and shoe manufacturing. As a resident of Ironton remarked, the communities were "ancient and hereditary foes" in their endeavors in growth and civic improvements. After about 1900, their town and high school baseball and football teams were bitter rivals. The rivalry took on greater importance for Ironton in the 1920s as the city, heretofore growing rather rapidly, saw its growth slowing as the iron ore deposits at its doorstep petered out. Local elites, concerned about sustaining the social and physical modernity of their community, discerned in football the "moral, and hard-working, manly character . . . needed to fuel the city's growth."⁷ The Tanks became an instrument that compensated for economic problems beyond their control. Nowhere was this attitude more apparent than in the newspapers of Ironton, the *Register*, the *Morning Irontonian*, and the *News*; indeed, they were the fount of boosterism. The *Register* in particular, with sportswriter Pete Burke leading the way, turned its print to good account for the cause, justifying or ignoring, as circumstances dictated, the Tanks' play depending on whether it said something good or bad about the community. At Portsmouth, where the local economy was flourishing, the *Times* and the *Morning Sun* followed the fortunes of the Smoke House club in a less parochial way, but Pete Minego of the *Times* certainly was a full-throated rooter for the Smoke House eleven. No one, though, portrayed the team as an ameliorating agency for problems of any kind in the community or as a treasure worthy of protection.

Organized as a semiprofessional team late in the fall of 1919 by former high school football players, many of them veterans of military service and nearly all blue-collar workers, the Ironton Tanks, named after the innovative weapon of World War I, played an abbreviated schedule, winning two games, losing one, and tying one against teams from neighboring communities.⁸ The team played their home games at Beechwood Park on the east side of the city. As there were no stands, fans stood along the sidelines, sometimes coming on the field and interfering with the play. By 1921, bleachers that accommodated a thousand spectators were in place. But the Ironton Tanks' record did not yet commend

them to the community as the “town team” as they had not yet displaced an older semiprofessional club in the city, the Lombards.

The next year, the Tanks began to assert their supremacy in the Ohio Valley, which they would enjoy throughout much of the decade. Giving them leadership were two outstanding and colorful players. Charlton “Shorty” Davies, who had played behind the great Chic Harley at Ohio State, was a speedy and shifty back running from the single wing. He also served as coach and captain of the team. William “Bill” Brooks, who had played on the freshman team at Ohio State in 1916, was a hulk of a tackle at 250 pounds controlling the line of scrimmage. Also manager of the team, he arranged its schedule. An emotional man, he cried when play did not go well for the Tanks. He did not cry often in 1920, his Tanks posting a record of five wins, a loss, and a tie. Among their victories was one over the Lombards that presaged the demise of the older team. They met the newly organized Smoke House team of Portsmouth twice, as well as elevens from Ashland in Kentucky and nearby communities in West Virginia. In the first game against the Smoke House, Frank Merriwell-like Shorty Davies, slightly injured and standing in street clothes on the sidelines in the first half, entered the fray in the second half and ran eighty yards with an intercepted pass to enable the Tanks to gain a tie 6-6.⁹ Just before play was to start for a second game, the Tanks protested the appearance of Smoke House men in uniform whose names were not on their team’s eligibility list. Teams might add new men week-to-week, a practice known as “loading-up,” but if they had exchanged eligibility lists naming players who had been on the roster the previous week, they could not do so. A team might still resort to the use of ringers. A good crowd on hand, the Tanks agreed to play and proceeded to defeat the Smoke House 14-0.¹⁰ Burke noted the good sportsmanship of the Tanks in their willingness to play. The following year, the Tanks found it useful to complain of the alleged violation of the eligibility rule. In the meantime, sportswriters in Ironton increasingly viewed the Tanks as a team “advertising” the community. What material benefits followed they did not say.

Sponsored by the Smoke House Company, which operated a tobacco shop in Portsmouth specializing in the sale of “Good Cigars in Perfect Condition,” cigarettes, and candies and serving as a hangout for men playing pocket billiards, the Smoke House eleven was a successor to the Norfolk & Western squad (the Norfolk & Western railroad operated a large classification yard in the city) that had played in 1919.¹¹ Many of the Smoke House men had been on the N. & W. eleven, and nearly all had played on the local high school team. Their most outstanding player was probably “Heckie” De Voss, a strong running back. They proved to be a lackluster team in 1920, winning three games, losing four, and tying three in a schedule composed of teams from Columbus and nearby communities. The Smoke House men played visitors at Millbrook Park, at the eastern edge of Portsmouth. The rickety stands there could accommodate about three thousand people.

Manifesting the traditional rivalry between Ironton and Portsmouth, the problem over the eligibility list foretold trouble coming in 1921—and it came.

The Tanks and Smoke House, strengthening their rosters, were optimistic about prospects for the season's play. Davies, though, was sitting out the season, having become a student at West Virginia Wesleyan.¹² Replacing him as coach was Frank Wieteki, a former player at Ironton High. Coming to Ironton from Steubenville only on weekends, Brooks yielded his post as manager to another tackle, Bill Schachleiter. In Harry Doerr, secretary-treasurer of the Smoke House Company, the Smoke House had a hard-nosed manager and in Dan Fries, a West Point man, a competent coach.

Tentatively scheduled to play each other twice, the Tanks and the Smoke House did not meet until late October in Ironton. By then, the Smoke House club had won two games, lost one, and tied one; the Tanks had won all three of their games. In the several days before the game, Burke and Minego turned out lengthy columns speculating on their offensive strategies, the size of the crowd, and whether the teams would "load-up."¹³ They predicted a "wide-open" game of end runs and passes. But play on a muddy field resulted in "few thrills" and no scoring.¹⁴ The game, asserted Duke Ridgley, a sports reporter for the *Huntington Dispatch*, was as exciting as a "croquet match."¹⁵ Slowing down the Tanks' offense and the pace of play were numerous penalties accounting for 145 yards against the Tanks, 45 against the Smoke House.

A measure of excitement followed the game. In articles sometimes three and four columns long, reporters argued about what had happened during the game. For a reporter for the *Register*, probably not Burke, the officiating had cost the Tanks a victory. The disproportionate yardage in penalties, he believed, took the fight out of the Tanks.¹⁶ After the game, explaining the disparity in yardage, officials Don Hamilton and Ray Eichenlaub, both former Notre Dame stars, supposedly told Brooks that they probably had "watched [Ironton] more closely than Portsmouth." By that admission, said the reporter, they had made themselves unfit to officiate any game in which the Tanks played. Joining his reporter in the censure was the editor of the *Register*. Hamilton, he flippantly noted, should have sat on the bench during a recent court case in Portsmouth—he meted out more severe penalties than did the judge in that hearing.¹⁷ Burke, often speaking of his city's "virtue," did not agree with his editor, saying that Hamilton and Eichenlaub, who had been "hurt" by the Tanks' criticism, had been "fair and square."¹⁸ The *Irontonian* described the officials' work as satisfactory. Both newspapers urged the Tanks to develop a more diversified offense and called on Ironton and Portsmouth fans along the sidelines not to behave again as "bitter rooters."



W.A. "Bill" Brooks, Tackle for Ironton Tanks, c. 1922. Photo courtesy of Lawrence County (Ohio) Historical Society.

Journalists could face a predicament in such circumstances: As much as they wanted the home team to win, they had to portray their community as a fortress of good sportsmanship.

At Portsmouth, in a story reeking with sarcasm, a *Times* reporter took obvious delight in finding fault with the Tanks' play and behavior: The Tanks had lost their "pepper" when the Smoke House men smothered their famous line plunges; they "fussed" among themselves; they were outplayed despite putting up "real" money for "outside" players and practicing vigorously for a month (he ignored the fact that no Smoke House men had accused the Tanks of not adhering to the eligibility list sent to Portsmouth); they "sneaked" off the field after the Smoke House players gave them a cheer at the game's end.¹⁹ Now the "famous" Tanks could give up their talk of playing the famous Canton Bulldogs. The referees, he was certain, had handled the game in a "perfect manner." Another column in the *Times* dismissed the Tanks' grumbling as a "Cheap Squeal Too Disgusting to Talk About."²⁰ But in another lengthy column, the *Times* did talk about the grumbling. The Tanks had "clamored" for Hamilton and Eichenlaub to officiate the game and now complained about them. In contrast, when the Smoke House men lost to the Tanks in 1920, they did not "squawk" and blame the officials. The Tanks were behaving in an unsportsmanlike manner, their wailing revealing the "small town stuff" of Ironton: "Now if this isn't Ironton's calibre we will quit. That is one potent reason why it never has gotten out of its swaddling clothes. As one reporter said Sunday, they have a courthouse, a new bridge and a real hotel and the rest you can give to the Indians."²¹ Football was becoming a metaphor for the failure of a community to achieve progress.

The quarreling among the newspapers abated momentarily as the Tanks and Smoke House met other teams. On the Sunday following the tie with the Tanks, the Smoke House easily defeated a nondescript eleven from Asheville, portending, fans believed, a good performance against the Tanks in two weeks.²² Taking a week off, the Tanks then played the Lombards in a game billed as deciding the city championship. The Tanks handily defeated the Lombards, with rumors ensuing that several Lombards would join the Tanks for the return game with the Smoke House.²³ Their status diminished, the Lombards played out the season in a desultory fashion and disappeared from football in the city. Now the Tanks had the field to themselves, and now the community, Burke instructing it, began to take a proprietary interest in them as the team of the town.

Meanwhile, Doerr and Schachleiter were fitfully arranging the second game between their teams. At the outset, they and sportwriters wrangled over the selection of officials. Doerr wanted Hamilton and Eichenlaub to serve again, but Schachleiter, with his Tanks still complaining about penalties, refused to accept them, insisting that their work in the first game had not been "credible."²⁴ Portsmouth reporters then accused the Tanks of double-dealing: When in 1920 Hamilton and Eichenlaub officiated the Smoke House-Tanks game won by the Tanks, Irontonians praised them as the "best ever," but when the same men officiated the game in 1921 ending in a tie, the Irontonians excoriated them.²⁵ The Tanks prevailed in the dispute, and the managers selected as officials Herman

Beckleheimer, the football coach at Morris Harvey, W. C. Thomas, an Ohio Conference official living in Wellston, and Benton Salt of Columbus.²⁶ Perhaps now, said the *Sun* of Portsmouth, the Tanks would stop their “crying.”²⁷ Throughout the quarrel, Burke and other Ironton scribes were relatively silent.

As it turned out, what became really controversial had little to do with the officials. Early in the week of the game, the *Sun* reported that the Tanks were talking about using “Hootie” North, a good running back from the Lombards, and several other Lombards, noting in complaint that the contract for the game called for the use of the same players who had appeared in the earlier game—that the Tanks could not use “more outside material” than the several highly paid players already on the roster.²⁸ According to the *Times*, the Tanks wished to use men from Ashland and Catlettsburg in Kentucky and from Huntington, Ceredo, Kenova, and Marshall College in West Virginia. “Yep,” the reporter exclaimed, “they play with all of them.”²⁹ Burke, taking note of the report, dismissed it as a ‘Portsmouth wail.’³⁰ Later, the *Register* sounded words of defiance—though not of relevance, unless wrong repaid wrong: Portsmouth was moaning and groaning about the Lombards joining the Tanks but was saying nothing about the Smoke Houses sending a fake eligibility list to Ironton the previous year, one that did not include Red Williams and Red Selby “no more than a rabbit.” Ironton did not complain then and still did not care whether the Smoke House went to the end of the football domain for players. Without explaining its position, the *Register* simply stated that the first eligibility list could not apply now and that the Tanks would add Lombards as they had in 1920.³¹ The sportswriters were always adept at finding the mote in an opponent’s eyes.

The *Sun* also saw something askew in the appearance of Shorty Davies at the Tanks’ practices. As its reporter understood it, Davies had come from West Virginia with new plays for the Tanks and was practicing with the team. When asked whether he would play, he had “lifted [his] eyebrows indifferently, saying ‘Yes, if they needed me.’”³² If he played, the *Sun* argued, he would be guilty of professionalism and the Tanks of ignoring their eligibility list. Nonetheless, the Smoke House wanted him to play because otherwise the Tanks would put up a “cheap squawk.” The *Register* and *Irontonian* knew that Davies had come to the Tanks’ camp with new plays but did not report that he might run them in the game. He gave the Tanks some plays and the Smoke House some “chills,” said the *Register*, but he did not practice with the team and returned to West Virginia satisfied that he had completed his mission for the home team.³³

As the reporters quarreled, the teams practiced. After the Smoke House defeated Asheville, Fries had his men practicing long, hard hours for the next two weeks.³⁴ “Bristling” with strength and confidence, the line worked particularly hard on opening holes for backs; probably no defense, declared the *Sun*, could halt that attack.³⁵ The Smoke House men were bent on winning, on giving the “highly touted” Tanks a “big surprise.” At Ironton, the Tanks held “snappy” practices, often working on new plays, presumably Davies’ plays, and a new offensive system of some sort.³⁶ Probably more for publicity than for practice, the

Tanks ran a signal drill on the eve of the game in the middle of the street in front of the Elks' Club.³⁷

Meanwhile, the fans were preparing and being prepared for the game. Interest was mounting in both communities, created and sustained in part by the newspapers, especially the *Register* and the *Irontonian*, with their daily accounts of what was happening and what might happen. Probably no other athletic contest in the history of the cities had become such a staple of everyday intercourse. Even persons only remotely interested in football, though recognizing the hyperbole in the sportswriters' language, had to discover something in it to stir them. They could read that the game would be a "terrible battle," a "titanic struggle," the "greatest pigskin scrap," the "greatest conflict ever in this part of the map," one of the "greatest struggles ever in the Ohio Valley."³⁸

Sports columnists, players, and fans all looked for a great crowd at Millbrook. Spectators there would become part of the "largest crowd" in the history of sports in the Ohio Valley and would make the game the "best attended."³⁹ Many would come, said the writers, who ordinarily did not follow the Smoke House or the Tanks or football generally. All the newspapers ran display advertisements for the clash. Anticipating a large crowd, Doerr ordered three thousand tickets printed. Smoke House players worked the city, selling tickets for a dollar each to fans, who could also purchase them at the Smoke House and other retail establishments.⁴⁰ About eight hundred Irontonians, many of them the "fair sex," bought tickets at several downtown locations in their city.⁴¹ They could journey to Portsmouth in various ways. About 150 fans purchased "accommodations" on a special Norfolk & Western train that would take them to a point very near Millbrook.⁴² A greater number were driving their automobiles despite a warning that a recent heavy rainfall had damaged a stretch of highway between Portsmouth and Ironton.⁴³ A small number expected to board traction cars, which made numerous stops along the route between the cities.

Whatever mode of transport they chose, the fans were moving in an electrifying atmosphere, similar, some thought, to what the loyal alumni of Yale or Princeton experienced when their teams played a crucial game. The "civilian population of Ironton," said Burke, "were following their warriors to the bloody battleground to see them do their best in the conflict."⁴⁴ Once at the field of play, they would see the colors of the Tanks, the "Big Red," draped on one goal post, the blue and white of the Smoke House on the other.⁴⁵ They would also hear the forty-piece Elks' band, which expected to strike up a victory march after the Tanks crushed the Smoke House and then to play a funeral dirge for the Smoke House players and the groaning Portsmouth crowd.⁴⁶ They knew, though, that a Portsmouth band awaited them at Millbrook prepared to draw from a similar repertoire. Smoke House fans were less imbued with rah-rah but, like college students at the bonfire on the night before the big game, longed for "the sound of the whistle reverberating across picturesque Millbrook."⁴⁷

The game proved less interesting than the anticipatory rhetoric and the subsequent controversy. The Tanks arrived late and play did not begin until well after 2 p.m. Played before a crowd of about four thousand on a "springy" field

rendered wet by a recent rainfall, the game was devoid of daring strategy and sensational plays.⁴⁸ Nor was it “ze battle royal” forecast by the *Irontonian*. After an evenly contested first quarter, the Tanks, their “new plays” a telling factor and their defense blunting the Smoke House aerial game, “completely out played, out ran, out fought, and out classed” the Smoke House eleven. They were leading 14-0 and threatening to score again with four minutes to play when, at the threat of Fries to discontinue play on a darkening field, Thomas, with Beckelheimer concurring, ended the game. The Tanks had no great quarrel with the decision to halt play but vigorously protested the officials’ declaration that the Smoke House had forfeited the game by a score of 1-0 and that all bets were off. They argued that the score of 14-0 should stand, and contended then and later that besides distorting reality, the forfeited score especially accommodated gamblers who had bet on the Smoke House and who now repudiated their wagers.⁴⁹ Perhaps more exciting than the game was the fighting among fans during and after play. About a dozen fights occurred during the game, provoked, said the *Times*, by jubilant Ironton fans who insulted Smoke House partisans. After the game, a “big scrap” in East Portsmouth broke out among adherents of the teams, with “considerable blood spilled.”⁵⁰

The Tanks had much more to complain about than the forfeit. At the conclusion of play, Doerr refused to give them their share of the gate, 40 percent of what had to be a healthy sum. In their initial stories on the game, neither the *Register* nor the *Irontonian* offered a clear or detailed explanation for Doerr’s action, but they condemned it in harsh language. Commenting on the day at Millbrook, the *Register* asserted that the “cheapest, rankest, lowdowned, crawfishiest, most childish, utterly despicable trick of the whole affair was the action of the Portsmouth team management in withholding the forty percent share of the gate receipts promised the Ironton club. This marks the Portsmouth football team as a bunch of quitters, too unsportsmanlike for words. . . .”⁵¹ The *Irontonian* only hinted at the problem, saying that the Smoke House men “kicked” at the appearance of one Art Hall at quarterback—an implication that the Tanks had used an ineligible player. In withholding the Tanks’ share of the gate, the Smoke House men, the *Irontonian* declared, had pulled the “cheapest trick ever known in what can be called CIVILIZATION.”⁵² Both newspapers arraigned Portsmouth as “poor losers,” as a community that could never stand defeat, as an “outcast city athletically.” Not surprisingly, Ironton fans were crying, “Scratch them off the list!”

Joining the *Register* and the *Irontonian* in their attack on the Smoke House eleven and Portsmouth was the *Herald-Republican*, a newspaper published in Waverly, a small town about twenty miles north of Portsmouth. Owing to some untoward incidents in baseball games in the past summer between teams from Waverly and Portsmouth, the *Herald* was predisposed to censure the larger community. Describing the close of the Tank-Smoke House game, the *Herald* reporter subjected the Smoke House players to a scurrilous assault: “Then showing a streak of yellow the entire length of their backbones, the Portsmouth bunch quit playing when the ball was within a yard of Ironton’s [Portsmouth’s] goal and

only four minutes to play. . . ." After the officials forfeited the game to Ironton and called all bets off, the Portsmouth "gang," demonstrating their sportsmanship, withheld the Tanks' share of the gate, about \$1,600. It was, he wrote, a "cheap squeal from a cheap bunch of sports and only reflects the character of the city. It is the same dirty tactics that were used against Waverly the past ball season."⁵³ What else could one expect, he added, of a community where a sportswriter slurred the Waverly high football and baseball teams?

Only hours after the game, the Tanks secured what they considered to be a satisfactory resolution of the dispute over whether the officials could declare a forfeit of a game halted by darkness and the consequent refusal of a team to continue to play. Schachleiter sent telegrams to Dr. Henry L. Williams, renowned coach at the University of Minnesota and a member of the National Collegiate Athletic Association rules committee, and to Paul Tobin, secretary of the committee, asking them whether the decision at Millbrook was correct: "Kindly wire at my expense your decision on the following: Teams scored twice in three quarters, 14 to 0 score. Referee calling game on the account of darkness, four minutes to play. Has referee right to give decision 1 to 0 after losing team refuses to finish game?" Both Williams and Tobin found the forfeiture to be incorrect.⁵⁴ Tobin's response read, "Losing Team Refuses to Finish. Score Stands 14 to 0. Referee Out of Jurisdiction to Declare Game Forfeited to Winning Side 1-0." The Tanks sent the "word" to Portsmouth, but, as the *Irontonian* saw it, "the howling birds" there were not likely to hear or heed it.⁵⁵

The real issue, though, was not the forfeit, but the question of the Tanks' share of the gate. Through their newspapers, fans, players, and journalists in Portsmouth and Ironton fought a battle of words over the issue, often impugning one another's honesty and integrity before finally resolving the dispute. Anyone reading only the Ironton newspapers might have concluded that the Smoke House had acted as banditti, simply seizing the receipts and withholding the Tanks share without any pretense of justification. The Ironton sportswriters gave their readers hardly any inkling of what moved Doerr to his seemingly spiteful decision.

The *Times* did have an answer, but one that could not sit well with Tanks' fans. A reporter for the *Times*, probably Pete Minego, gave but a bareboned account of the game, even the controversial conclusion to it, sketchily saying that Fries ordered his team off the field as darkness fell and that the officials then forfeited the game to the Tanks 1-0. He offered no comment on the correctness of the decision.⁵⁶ But he did call attention to the Tanks' apparent use of players who were not on the eligibility list, specifically Art Hammond, Earle "Red" Shannon, and Ashby Blevins. Early in the first quarter, the Smoke House captain, Lonnie Chinn, realized that Hammond, playing quarterback, was not on the Tanks eligibility list, that he was playing under an assumed name, that of Art Hall. Then the Smoke House discovered that Shannon and Blevins were also playing as ringers. Doerr took up the issue, meeting with Schachleiter for about fifteen minutes as the crowd waited for play to resume. Finally, he consented to the Tanks' use of the three men. The reporter's account was quite different from later stories, which said that the manager permitted Hammond to play after the meeting

and only later in the game had learned that the Tanks were playing with two other ringers. In the view of the *Times* man, the three won the game for the Tanks, the “native” Irontonians doing little worthy of mention. What made the behavior of the Tanks reprehensible, he wrote, was not so much that they had brought in ringers but that they had sullied competition between “locals” of each community, had turned a game between two communities into one between insiders and outsiders. The *Sun* seconded the *Times* reporter, declaring that the “best part of the [Tank] team never saw Ironton.”⁵⁷ Accordingly, the Tanks had no right to call themselves the Ironton Tanks. At no time did the Ironton writers respond to these allegations touching on the essential worth of their community.

Giving a more unpleasant turn to the Tanks’ use of “outsiders” was another story appearing in the *Times* on the day of its account of the game.⁵⁸ On good authority, a reporter averred, four well-known Ironton men had “engineered” a deal with Hammond, Shannon, and Blevins to play for the Tanks. As soon as the ringers were working out with the Tanks, the four men sent \$5,000 to Portsmouth to bet on their team. The Tanks, mere figureheads, had allowed gamblers, feathering their own nest, to revamp the lineup. “Why we have a hammerlock on you,” a “leading citizen” of Ironton reportedly boasted on the day of the game, “or we would not be down here. We are not taking any chances whatever. Why everyone in Ironton knew that Hammond, Blevins, and Shannon were to play.” He explained that solicitors for the Tanks had passed the hat throughout the community, raising enough money to pay all the players before they went to Portsmouth. All in town, willing as they were to empty their weekly pay envelopes to beat Portsmouth, “kicked in.” Learning of the purported contributions to the Tanks and the alleged use of ringers, a Portsmouth fan expressed dismay: “The Tanks pulled off a regular White Sox stunt yesterday and got away with it. They would use any kind of trick to win.” Their crowing about the victory would not give them their share of the gate, said the *Times*. Doerr, insisting that the Tanks had willfully violated a written contract, swore that he would not give them one red penny; he had engaged an attorney and would resist payment to the last ditch. The receipts, in the meantime, were in a big safe at the Smoke House.

In other articles, the *Times* provided more detail on the use of the ringers and commented on what the Smoke House should have done at their discovery and what their use said about the Tanks and their community.⁵⁹ Hammond, Shannon, and Blevins did, in fact, play under assumed names. Hammond was a quarterback who was currently playing at Marshall and had played for Ashland teams; he used the name Art Hall, an old-line Tank, and replaced “Pick” Progler. He supplied the “brains and beef” for the Tanks against the Smoke House. A halfback, Shannon was then at Morris Harvey College; his name in the lineup was Ball, apparently for Nate Ball, the former Lombard who had joined the Tanks.⁶⁰ Blevins, who had once been with the Tanks, had recently been playing as a guard for the Ashland Tigers; his name for the game was that of a Tank, Howard Fritz. Though supposedly aware of the Tanks’ intention to use the men, at the appearance of Shannon and Hammond on the field, Ironton fans exclaimed, “Who are those guys in the backfield?” The Smoke House players, not as gullible

as the Tanks believed them to be, soon knew that something was wrong, recognizing that the men parading as Hall, Ball, and Fritz had taken on their names. The Tanks had arrived at Millbrook late, insisted one Portsmouth writer, to make it more difficult for anyone to identify them. Early on, though, Chinn had seen that the Tank playing as Hall was a ringer; and then a little later, he and other Smoke House men realized that the two other Tanks were also ringers. Somewhere along the line, the Smoke House team, the *Times* argued, should have refused to continue the game until the ringers left the field. Beckelheimer and Thomas had erred, too, in not declaring that all bets were off as soon as Chinn told them that ringers were playing for the Tanks. Chinn, explaining the Smoke House decision to play after he recognized Hammond as a ringer, said that Hammond had not “shown much” when he had played for an Ashland eleven. Had Chinn and Doerr known then that the Tanks had two more ringers, the Smoke House would not have played on, but Schachleiter had assured them that he had no more—“All Bill did was blink his eyes and throw a blank stare.”

For the *Times*, the game revealed essential differences between the teams and even their communities. The Smoke House men, all local residents playing for the honor and love of the game and the city, had not received one cent during the season. In turn, the community was “delighted” that they played for Portsmouth. In contrast, instead of giving local players a chance, the Tanks, fearing that the Smoke House might beat their regular players and acting out of “anything to win” spirit, had recruited high-priced collegiate stars, paying them as much as \$300 a game. Thus, they had ended up hopelessly in debt, in constant need for special solicitations to the community, so-called “Boosters’ Days.” Besides the three ringers, three regulars in the Tanks’ lineup were from out of town.⁶¹ If Irontonians wanted a professional team, said the *Times*, they should have invited the Dayton Triangles or Columbus Panhandles to play for them.

As the Portsmouth journalists mounted an attack on the Tanks and their city, bluster and obfuscation reigned in Ironton. Within hours after leaving Millbrook, the Tanks retained Edgar Miller, a Portsmouth attorney, as their counsel and instructed him to initiate a civil action, a breach of contract, to claim their purse.⁶² Apparently Miller never filed a suit, but probably the Tanks saw the threat to do so as a Damoclean sword hanging over the Smoke House. Soon the *Register* and *Irontonian* were admitting, by implication, that the Tanks had indeed employed ringers. According to an editorialist for the *Register*, when the Smoke House squad came to Ironton in 1920 with thirty-three men, many not on the eligibility list, the Tanks had consented to their playing.⁶³ Burke took a similar line. He rebuked the Smoke House again for using fictitious names for Red Williams and Red Selby in one of the games in 1920 between the teams; that transgression, he suggested, gave the Tanks the right to sin, too.⁶⁴ The *Irontonian* noted that Portsmouth did not complain about the use of Hammond when the Tanks were “doing nothing” in the first half.⁶⁵

The Ironton newspapers denounced Portsmouth in other ways, often irrelevant but good for use in a cat fight. The editor for the *Register* urged Ironton teams of any sort never to fall in with the den of thieves at Portsmouth and

counseled teams outside of Ironton to follow suit. He warned all teams of the “petty spirit” permeating Portsmouth. Portsmouth newspapers, he argued, could defend but not justify the theft from the Tanks. The Smoke House squad would be “world beaters” if it played at the level of the “welchers” and “squealers” in Portsmouth. After suggesting that the “welchers” of Portsmouth had lost all the gate in gambling, the acid-tongued Burke called the Portsmouth people “bandits.”⁶⁶ Gratuitously describing the field at Millbrook as a cow pasture, the *Irontonian* reported receiving many letters censuring Portsmouth and declared that the city could not stand defeat.⁶⁷ Schachleiter, muddying the water, asserted that he had the name of the Portsmouth man who had offered Hammond \$200 to deliver the Tanks’ signals to the Smoke House.⁶⁸

Strengthening its call on athletic teams to boycott Portsmouth clubs, Burke portrayed Portsmouth as a pariah in the Ohio Valley, and the controversy appeared to spill rivulets of animus beyond Ironton. Letters from Waverly and other communities, said the *Register*, were damning Portsmouth. A self-serving statement that the *Register* did not document in any way, it bore the shadow of substance in columns appearing in the *Huntington Dispatch* and the *Herald-Republican*. Ridgley at the *Dispatch*, summarizing the events at Millbrook, feared that professional football, which had been doing well in the valley, had been damaged by the “petty larceny stuff.”⁶⁹ The *Herald* especially joined in the chorus of condemnation. After initially condemning the Smoke House for withholding the Tanks gate, the *Herald* broadened its strictures, using a recent incident in Waverly to denigrate the *Times* and Portsmouth. That fall, Portsmouth high school football players passed through Waverly on their way to Chillicothe “whooping and hollering” about the lathering that they would give to the high school team there.⁷⁰ Returning home after their loss, the players were remarkably quiet. Pete Minego of the *Times* argued that they had outplayed their “beefy” opponents—or some “such rot.” He always had “alibi fits” in his columns but never said a word about the way Portsmouth had recently robbed Jackson High of a victory. To read the *Times*, one would think that Portsmouth football and baseball teams were “champions of all,” that their community wished to lord its prowess all over the valley. With nothing but alibis to offer, Minego had an “awful job” as sports editor of the *Times*.

Perhaps the Jackson Bearcats read the *Register*. Just before their scheduled game with the Smoke House at Millbrook, a week after the Tanks had played there, the Bearcats canceled it, supposedly because of the “rotten tactics” of the Smoke House in denying the Tanks their money.⁷¹ The Bearcats, reported the *Register*, resented Doerr’s action and feared that they would not be paid for their game. At Doerr’s refusal to give them a certified check for \$100 before the game, the Bearcats stayed home.⁷² They expected other teams in Jackson to continue the blacklisting of the Smoke House and other Portsmouth teams into the basketball season.

Despite the bitter rhetoric, Schachleiter went to Portsmouth a week after the game to confer with Doerr, confident that he would return home with the Tanks’ share of the gate.⁷³ Rehearsing the course of the game, Doerr would not

give an inch: The Tanks had deliberately and flagrantly violated the contract for the game by using Hammond; the Smoke House had “graciously” consented to his playing; Schachleiter, after saying that he had no more ringers in the lineup, proceeded to use two more. And that was why the Tanks had gone home penniless and why Schachleiter would now return to Ironton without the purse. Schachleiter’s counter-accusation, the allegation that a Portsmouth man had tried to bribe Hammond, was hardly germane and proved of no avail. He departed Portsmouth vowing to pursue legal action—and not to “be long about it.” For the moment, though, there was no movement to resolve the dispute. If eligibility lists had any meaning, if they were more than ritualistic documents blinking at deception, the Smoke House men had reason to complain. Soon after the meeting, the *Register* acknowledged that Shannon had recently played for Morris Harvey.⁷⁴ The Tanks had placed themselves in a moral bind, at an impasse not easily resolved in their favor by legal action.

Though not settled, the dispute lost its shrillness in the next few weeks. The Smoke House men played but one more game, incurring a loss to a strong eleven from Wellston, the Eagles.⁷⁵ Still grouching over the loss of the gate at Portsmouth and evidently facing problems in meeting their expenses, the Tanks played three more games, all arranged on short notice, with the hope that they would fatten their treasury. After tying the Eagles in a game that saw several players ejected for fighting, the Tanks met Morris Harvey, which had in its lineup the ringer Shannon.⁷⁶ Obviously, the collegians had no qualms about playing the semi-professional men. In a “spectacular” and “brilliant” game, the Tanks won by a touchdown. Then, after quarrelsome negotiations with the Eagles over the guarantee, Schachleiter arranged a return game with them, one supposedly determining the mythical championship of the Ohio Valley.⁷⁷ Learning of the negotiations, the *Times* took obvious pleasure in noting Schachleiter’s need to pay his “high-priced” players.⁷⁸ The game was the occasion for a rough-and-tumble afternoon: Tanks and Eagles fought on the field, Tanks’ fans came on to the field at one point—one supposedly brandishing a gun—and Tanks’ fans “roughly handled” some Eagles fans in the streets after the game.⁷⁹ The Tanks came away from the battle with a hard-fought victory 7-6 and, with a record of seven wins and two ties, claimed sovereignty over football in the Ohio Valley.

As the Tanks and Smoke House closed off play, the controversy over the gate was coming to a salutary end. Paradoxically, if anyone cut the strands in the Gordian knot that the Tanks and Smoke House had tied, it was Harry Taylor, editor of the *Times*, which in its sports pages had assailed Ironton and the Tanks for their behavior. Early in December, Schachleiter and Brooks, their team in straitened circumstances and Doerr intransigent on sharing the gate, went to Portsmouth to meet with Miller, saying that they intended to press the matter through legal channels.⁸⁰

A few days later and a few hours before the Tanks played their final game against Wellston, Taylor published a lengthy editorial calling on the teams to settle their dispute and to go on to “better feelings,” to “better sportsmanship.”⁸¹ In measured prose yielding little of the high ground for the Smoke House and

scolding the Tanks and the Ironton newspapers, Taylor reviewed the circumstances of the controversy. The *Times* had refrained editorially, he said, from commenting on the dispute because feelings had been running high, but now that the season was over, the time had come for a settlement. Clearly, the Tanks had come onto the field with three collegiate players entered on the eligibility list under fictitious names. At the discovery of the “star” ringers, the Smoke House could have refused to play but had remained on the field, played and lost. Though legally the Smoke House might withhold the Tanks’ portion of the gate, “rightly” and “morally” and in the good name of the game, Doerr should pay the Tanks. Because the Tanks management “put over” a “wretchedly crooked deal,” why, asked Taylor, should the Smoke House men enter the “crooked sweepstakes”? He trusted the Portsmouth manager to act accordingly and the Ironton fans and Ironton newspapers, which had countenanced the Tanks’ use of ringers and had even used the names of their own players for the ringers, to condemn the Tanks management. Then better sports relations might ensue.

At Ironton, the *Register* and the *Irontonian* published Taylor’s editorial in full. The editor of the *Register*, saying that he would not quarrel with “good old Harry Taylor,” scoffed at his column and justified the Tanks’ recourse to ringers. Had teams ever paid heed to eligibility lists in semiprofessional football?⁸² Did Portsmouth remember using ringers against the Tanks in 1920? Yet, what happened in 1920, he argued, was not the point. It was that the Smoke House had taken the field for a game that they had agreed to play and would have received no gate if the Tanks had not played. The Tanks had shared in the creation of the receipts and were entitled to their share. Would the Smoke House men have denied the Tanks their share of the gate had they won? Their jubilation at winning would have been so great that they would have increased the Tanks share. Concluding, he advised Ironton teams to sever athletic relations with Portsmouth, which always sulked at a loss. A few days later, an Ironton sportswriter, evidently Burke, accused the *Times* of lying in alleging that the *Register* had protected the collegiate players by using fictitious names for them.⁸³

For all the journalists’ harsh language, the Tanks and Smoke House were moving to a settlement of the dispute. Taylor’s editorial, with its call for the Smoke House to make payment to the Tanks despite their misconduct, may have been a decisive factor in breaking the impasse. Only days later, the *Register* reported that payment was at hand.⁸⁴ And soon in a front-page story, the *Register* recounted details of a final settlement, as did the *Irontonian* in a later story.⁸⁵ Schachleiter and Brooks had journeyed to Portsmouth and conferred with Raymond Saddler, who was momentarily replacing Doerr as manager—probably a face-saving maneuver for Doe—Captain Chinn, and several other players. Echoing Taylor’s opinion, they all subscribed to the view that the Smoke House, having played the game after learning of the Tanks’ violation of the eligibility list, should make payment. Amicability prevailing, Saddler computed the expenses of the game and wrote out a check for \$725 for the Tanks, payment in full for their share of the gate. Now the *Register* and the *Irontonian*, which had only recently called for Ironton teams to break relations with Portsmouth, saw the rivalry between the

two communities as a healthy one and urged the Smoke House and Tanks to continue playing the next year. Ironton fans did not act on Taylor's proposal that they condemn the Tanks' management.

What had poisoned the well, all the newspapers agreed, was gambling, which often led teams to use ringers and incited fans to unruly behavior. In another long editorial, Taylor called for the suppression of gamblers. They had brought about conditions discrediting the game and both communities:

There was a coterie of men in Portsmouth who were at each game, flashing rolls of bills, offering to bet, and there was a similar coterie from Ironton just eager to cover the bets offered. These men did not care about football. They were interested in making money, and they were not choice about how they made, so long as they won. It is not necessary to mention names, everybody [*sic*] who cares to know in either town, is familiar with them.

If we are to have professional football next year, these gambling followers of the game must be suppressed, barred from the game if they will not be good. Football is too fine a game to become the plaything of gamblers.⁸⁶

For once, the *Register* did not argue with the *Times* saying, too, that the gamblers had to be suppressed and that the police of Ironton would do so.⁸⁷ Thus, the warring parties put an end to the issue of the gate, but "better feelings" did not follow. The next year, the Smoke House, after initially agreeing to play the Tanks, decided that the "bitter feelings" existing between the teams precluded their appearance on the same field together.

* * *

The controversial game said much about the state of semiprofessional football in Ironton and Portsmouth—and probably in Ohio and the nation. A small replica of the Carlinville—Taylorsville game, also played in 1921, it involved the use of ringers for the purpose of winning and securing an advantage in wagering. It demonstrated the inchoate organization of a sport that did not conform to widely accepted standards of conduct. Stagg could have pointed to the game as an example of what commercialized football could do to the integrity of athletic competition. Stagg's strictures aside, the "commercial" crowd of four thousand at the game, amounting to more than a quarter of the male population twenty years and older in the two cities—14,613—the cohort probably constituting the bulk of the fans there—testified to the potential popularity of semiprofessional football in small Midwestern cities.⁸⁸ Teams appearing as the blood and bone of a community seeking status might muster, as did the Tanks, substantial support there.

The game also spoke to the role of newspapers in sports in small-town America, where informality and personalism, the stock of everyday life, permitted sports columnists and their editors to take up issues of football and baseball in a passionate and adversarial way. In contrast, the sports reporters in the metropolitan press—say in New York or Chicago—where formality and anonymity were more evident, seldom engaged in verbal combat with one another. Their language, polished though it may have been, was often objective and antiseptic. They were less likely to become partisans for the home team and its community. Among the

metropolitan writers, only the “Gee Whizzers,” men like Grantland Rice and Ring Lardner, who celebrated the feats of national sports heroes—Babe Ruth, Jack Dempsey, and others—invested their language with emotional fervor.⁸⁹

Though the sportswriters in Portsmouth and Ironton traded alike in invective, they came to their rhetoric from different perspectives. Surely the writers in Portsmouth were on the side of the angels; their team and community had done nothing wrong. They had no stake as boosters in the Smoke House as a team of the town. Affecting great outrage, they could easily lecture the Tanks on their behavior, alleging that they represented the innate nature of their community. At Ironton, Burke and other sportswriters had a daunting task. They had to defend the Tanks and speak as boosters on behalf of a community that, flagging in its growth and seeking redemptive symbols, was in the process of taking the team into its fold as an institution representing the virtue of Ironton. They did so by evasion, obfuscation, bluster, defiance, calls for boycotts, and counterattacks. “So’s your old man” was often their cry. They spoke, too, for the pride and autonomy of a small town concerned about its place in the region and the nation. Ringers gave them a means of redress. The sportswriters opened the door to businessmen in the city eventually to appropriate the Tanks and make loyalty to them the touchstone of civic patriotism. It was no sudden whim when several years later, a leading businessman, hearing a complaint against the Tanks, declared “Knock the TANKS and you knock Ironton.”⁹⁰

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1. “Pro Elevens Hurt Sport, Says Stagg,” *New York Times*, November 2, 1923.
 2. Bob Carroll, *The Ohio League, 1910-1919* (N. Huntingdon, Pa.: Professional Football Researchers Association, 1997), 2.
 3. The pioneering account of this incident is J. Thomas Jable, “The Birth of Professional Football: Pittsburgh Athletic Clubs Ring in Professionals in 1892,” *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* (April 1979), 131-174.
 4. See the following sources for accounts of the use of these ringers: Carroll, *The Ohio League*, 56; Phil Dietrich, *Down Payments: Professional Football 1896-1930 As Viewed From the Summit* (N. Huntingdon, Pa.: Professional Football Researchers Association, 1995), 85-86; [Carroll], *Bulldogs on Sunday, 1921* (N. Huntingdon, Pa.: Professional Football Researchers Association, n. d. p.), 5ff. For an interesting account of Knute Rockne’s involvement in the use of ringers, see Emil Klosinski, *Pro Football in the Days of Rockne* (New York: Carlton Press, Inc., 1970), 36ff. See also Jack Cusack, *Pioneer in Pro Football* (Fort Worth: Privately Printed, 1963). 7ff.
 5. For a detailed definition of semiprofessional football, see Carroll, “Semi or Pro?” *The Coffin Corner*, XIX No. 1 (Late Winter, 1996), 20-21.
 6. On the nature of small towns in the nation in the 1920s, see Richard Lingeman, *Small Town America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1980), 32ff. See also David J. Russo, *Families and Communities: A New View of American History* (Nashville: The American Association for State and Local History, 1974), 14ff.
 7. Phillip Gene Payne, “Modernity Lost: Ironton, Ohio, in Industrial and Post-Industrial America” (Doctoral Dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1994), 267.
 8. On the early history of the Tanks, see C. Robert Barnett, *The Spartans and the Tanks* (N. Huntingdon, Pa.: Professional Football Researchers Association, 1983), 4-5; C. Robert

- Barnett and Linda Terhune, "When the Tanks Were Tops," *River Cities Monthly*, I, No. 11 (September 1979), 14-20; and Jack Coins, "Tanks Copped 85, Lost 17, Tied 15," *Ironton Tribune*, October 19, 1949.
9. "Davies' Long Run Was Brilliantly Executed," *Portsmouth Times* (hereafter abbreviated as *PT*), October 25, 1920, "Davies Ran 80 Yards for Lone Tally," *Ironton Register* (hereafter abbreviated as *IR*), October 26, 1920.
 10. "Immense Crowd Sees the Ironton Tanks Trounce Ancient Rivals in Football Classic," *Morning Irontonian* (hereafter abbreviated as *MI*), November 30, 1920; "Tanks Rumbled Over Portsmouth 14 to 0," *IR*, November 30, 1920.
 11. *Portsmouth City Directory*, 192, 2, VIII (Columbus, 1922), 36.
 12. In one report, the *Register* had Davies at West Virginia University, saying that he had returned to Morgantown. "Ironton Won Easy Victory From Portsmouth," *IR*, November 21, 1921. But other reports had him at West Virginia Wesleyan. Neither institution has a record of his matriculation in 1921.
 13. "Arrange Prelims for Portsmouth Game," *IR*, October 25, 1921; "Tanks Settle Down to Hard Work and Outlook is Bad for Portsmouth Visitors," *MI*, October 27, 1921; "Sweeping Runs Likely to Feature Tank Game Sunday," *IR*, October 27, 1921; "To Build Up Aerial Effort of Portsmouth," *IR*, October 28, 1921; "Tanks to Rely on Sweeping End Runs," *PT*, October 28, 1921.
 14. "Ironton and Portsmouth Battle to Scoreless Tie," *IR*, October 31, 1921; "Smoke House and Tanks Battle to Scoreless Tie," *PT*, October 31, 1921.
 15. Quoted in "Fumes," *IR*, November 1, 1921.
 16. "Ironton and Portsmouth Battle to Scoreless Tie."
 17. *IR*, November 3, 1921.
 18. "Fumes," *IR*, November 8, 1921.
 19. "Sunday's Game as Seen by the Portsmouth Times," *MI*, November 1, 1921.
 20. "Cheap Squeal Too Disgusting to Talk About," *PT*, November 1, 1921.
 21. "Peeved Because Team Was Clearly Outplayed, Ironton Tanks Are Rapping Officials," *PT*, November 2, 1921.
 22. "Smoke House Team Romps Over Asheville, 27-7," *PT*, November 7, 1921.
 23. "Tanks Win City Title From Lombards in Thrilling Game," *IR*, November 14, 1921; "Lombards Lose Championship," *MI*, November 15, 1921.
 24. "Tanks and Lombards Are Ready for the Whistle," *MI*, November 13, 1921.
 25. "Tanks Expect to Win With New System of Offense Sunday," *IR*, November 19, 1921.
 26. "Officials Chosen for Game Sunday," *IR*, November 19, 1921; "Decide Upon Officials for Smoke House-Tank Game Sunday," *Morning Sun* (hereafter abbreviated as *MS*), November 21, 1921.
 27. "Decide Upon Officials for Smoke House-Tank Game Sunday."
 28. "Smoke House Getting in Shape for Tanks," *MS*, November 15, 1921.
 29. "Will Be Held to Eligibility List," *PT*, November 16, 1921.
 30. "Lombards Can't Play Either Is Portsmouth Wail," *IR*, November 16, 1921.
 31. "All Injured Tanks Are Rounding into Shape Nicely for Sunday," *IR*, November 18, 1921.
 32. "Tanks-Smokehouse Teams Primed for Today's Great Battle," *MS*, November 20, 1921.
 33. "Ironton Won Easy Victory from Portsmouth," *IR*, November 21, 1921.
 34. "Smoke House Getting in Shape for Tank"; "Smoke House In Fine Trim," *MS*, November 18, 15.
 35. "Smoke House Team Confident of a Victory Over The Tanks," *MS*, November 17, 1921.

36. "Tanks Expect to Win With New System Of Offense Sunday."
37. "Tanks-Smokehouse Teams Primed for Today's Great Battle."
38. "Special Train Secured, Band Follows Tanks," *IR*, November 14, 1921; "Thousands Will Be in Attendance at the Tank-Portsmouth Game," *IR*, November 17, 1921; "Tickets Now for Sunday's Football Game On Sale," *MS*, November 16, 1921; "Buy Your Tickets Now for Sunday's Battle," *MS*, November 17, 1921; "Portsmouth Is Praying," *MI*, November 19, 1921.
39. "Lists Are Being Signed Rapidly for Special Train," *IR*, November 15, 1921; "Smoke House Getting in Shape for Tanks; "Portsmouth Is Praying."
40. "Tickets for Sunday's Football Game On Sale"; "Thousands Will Be in Attendance at Tank-Portsmouth Game."
41. "Convenient Arrangements for Special Train Made." *IR*, November 16, 1921; "Tanks Have a Snappy Session Last Evening," *MI*, November 18, 1921; "Lists Are Being Signed Rapidly."
42. "Convenient Arrangements for Special Train Made."
43. "Tanks Will Invade River City Strong Today," *MI*, November 20, 1921; "Lists Are Being Signed Rapidly for Special Train"; "Ironton Won Easy Victory."
44. "Special Train Secured, Band Follows Tanks."
45. "Tanks-Smokehouse Teams Primed For Today's Great Battle."
46. "Special Train Secured, Band Follows Tanks"; "Tanks-Smokehouse Teams Primed for Today's Great Battle."
47. "Tanks-Smokehouse Teams Primed for Today's Great Battle."
48. One may read detailed accounts of the game in "Ironton Won Easy Victory from Portsmouth"; and "Portsmouth Proves Very Easy for Tanks," *MI*, November 22, 1921.
49. Ibid, "Legal Action Likely [To] Be Taken," November 23, 1921.
50. "Fist Fights Enliven Game," *PT*, November 21, 1921.
51. "Ironton Won Easy Victory From Portsmouth."
52. "Portsmouth Proves Very Easy for Tanks."
53. "A Cheap Squeal," *Herald-Republican* (hereafter abbreviated as *HR*), November 21, 1921.
54. Quoted in "Rules Commission of Football Decides Game Could Not Be Forfeited and Clearly Indicates That 'Welchers' Have No Leg to Stand on," *IR*, November 22, 1921; "High Football Authorities," *MI*, November 22, 1921.
55. "High Football Authorities."
56. "Disregarding Iron-Bound Eligible List Tanks Import College Stars and Beat Smokehouse Eleven, 1 to 0," *PT* November 21, 1921.
57. "Smoke House Team to Play Two More Games," *MS*, November 24, 1921.
58. "Gamblers Take Over Tanks and Engineered Deal Whereby Three Ringers Joined Them to Beat Portsmouth," *PT*, November 21, 1921.
59. See the following issues of the *Times*: "Ironton Puts Up Jack for High Priced Birds," November 21, 1921; "Why Hat Is Always Passed in Ironton," November 21, 1921; "When Ironton Quits Paying its Players Cannonville Will Take Up Tiddle Winks," November 22, 1921; "Even Ironton Papers Carried Fictitious Names for Shannon, Blevins, Hammond," November 22, 1921; "Some More Bunk from Tanktown," November 22, 1921; "Only Few Players Left to Celebrate," November 22, 1921; "Beckelheimer Is From Morris Harvey, Nuf Sed," November 22, 1921; "Ironton Scribe Uses Fake Names, When He Knows Better," November 22, 1921; "Ironton Now Admits Stars Were Imported," November 22, 1921; "Why Tanks Came on the Field Late," November 23, 1921; "Ironton Manager Comes After Teams's Portion of Sunday's Receipts; He Returns Empty Handed," November 21, 1921.

60. One may find Shannon at Morris Harvey in the "Miscellaneous Records of the Intercollegiate Athletic Program of Morris Harvey College—1910/11-1947/48" and in the "Roster of Students, 1921-1922 Morris Harvey College Annual Catalogue," in Archives, The University of Charleston.
61. "Only Few Players Left to Celebrate."
62. "Legal Action Likely [To] Be Taken"; "Tanks Retain Local Attorney to Get Their Portion of Gate Receipts," *PT*, November 22, 1921; "To Begin Legal Proceedings for Receipts," *PT*, November 22, 1921.
63. *IR*, November 21, 1921.
64. "Fumes," *IR*, November 25, 1921.
65. "Ironton Paper Quotes Man Who Was Not In Game; Comment on Big Battle," *PT*, November 22, 1921.
66. *IR*, November 21, 1921; November 23, 1921.
67. "Legal Action Likely [To] Be Taken."
68. "Ironton Manager Comes After Team's Portion of Sunday's Receipts"; "Portsmouth Still Whining," *MI*, November 24, 1921.
69. "Diamond Dust," *Huntington Dispatch*, November 23, 1921.
70. "Chillicothe Shows Them Up," *HR*, November 24, 1921; "Poor Old Portsmouth," *HR*, December 8, 1921.
71. "Ironton Scribe Says Jackson Eleven Was Afraid of Locals," *MS*, December 1, 1921.
72. *IR*, November 28, 1921.
73. "Ironton Manager Comes After Team's Portion of Sunday's Receipts"; "Portsmouth Still Whining."
74. "Register Admits 'Red' Shannon Played With Ironton Tanks Here," *MS*, December 1, 1921.
75. "Wellston Beats the Smoke House Team 14-0," *PT* December 5, 1921.
76. "Sunday's Game Results in a Tie," *MI*, November 29, 1921; "Big Elevens Are Ready for Final Struggle," *MI*, December 3, 1921; "Tanks Defeat Morris Harvey Team 19 to 14," *MI*, December 4, 1921; "Tanks Win Greatest Game Ever Played in Ironton," *IR*, December 5, 1921.
77. "Tanks Begin Overtime Practices for Wellston Game," *IR*, December 9, 1921; "Wellston and Tanks Will Decide Title in Greatest Game of Entire Season," *IR*, December 10, 1921.
78. "Wellston Wants \$450," *PT*, December 8, 1921.
79. "Tanks Defeat Wellston, 7 to 6," *PT*, December 12, 1921; "Ironton Fans Beat Up Four Wellston Men and Then Hold Big Crowd at Bay With Their Guns," *PT*, December 12, 1921; "Tanks Win in Hard Struggle With Wellston," *IR*, December 12, 1921.
80. "Tanks Come After Money; Whistle for It," *PT* December 6, 1921.
81. "The Football Controversy," *PT*, December 9, 1921.
82. "The Football Controversy," *IR*, December 10, 1921; "The Football Controversy," *MI*, December 10, 1921.
83. "Lies, Lies, Lies Fill Sports Page of Portsmouth Times," *IR*, December 13, 1921.
84. *IR*, December 15, 1921.
85. "Portsmouth Pays Ironton Football Eleven in Full," *IR*, December 19, 1921; "Portsmouth Comes Clean," *MI*, December 20, 1921.
86. "Suppress the Gamblers," *PT*, December 21, 1921.
87. *IR*, December 22, 1921.

88. For population by age in Ironton and Portsmouth in 1920, see *Fourteenth Census of the United States, Population 1920*, III (Washington, D.C., 1922), 773-774.
89. For a description of the "Gee-Whizzers," see Benjamin G. Rader, *American Sports: From the Age of Folk Games to the Age of Spectators* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1983), 199.
90. "Stirring Appeal Made for Support of Tanks," *Ironton Tribune*, August 21, 1927.