

# BLONDY WALLACE AND THE BIGGEST FOOTBALL SCANDAL EVER

By Bob Braunwart and Bob Carroll

In 1906, the fierce rivalry between the Canton and Massillon pro football teams took a nasty turn toward the unsavory.

Most of the nastiness that sometimes showed through in 1905 came from fans goaded by newspaper hyperbole. Incendiary phrases like "hated foe" and "bitter enemy" lit up sports pages and ignited fiery oaths on street corners, but managers George Williams of Canton and J.J. Wise of Massillon conducted their clubs with the ethics typical of American businesses at the time. There might be surprise signings of stars such as Michigan's Willie Heston and tricky contract negotiations like Canton's "exclusive" with Carlisle, but ultimately there were real limits to how far either side might go to humble and humiliate the other. It was all right to hit below the belt, but no brass knuckles please.

But before the 1906 season ended, all restraints disappeared. Each side stood accused by the other of unfair and illegal practices. There were charges of darker, more dastardly deeds by individuals on both sides. Each club swore never to play the other again. And each was likely to follow through on the threat because both were out of the football business.

For Ohio professional football in general and for Massillon and Canton in particular, 1906 was a season of unprecedented disaster.

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To many Canton minds, the first shot fired in all-out war came a few days after the Massillon Tigers defeated the Canton team for the 1905 state championship. A news story in the Cleveland Plain Dealer alleged the Canton A.C. was broke and could not pay its players for that final game. Manager Williams indignantly denied that, insisting that every dollar promised had indeed been delivered.

Although the story appeared in Cleveland, many Cantonians believed it had originated in Massillon as a trick to discredit the C.A.C. and make it difficult to recruit outstanding players in 1906. Such Machiavellian tactics were not ascribed to J.J. Wise, who, even in Canton, was considered an honorable man. But Coach Ed. J. Stewart was regarded by his foes as an ambitious sharpie, not to be trusted in the clinches. With his newspaper connections, Cantonites reasoned, Stewart could have easily planted the story.

Whether Stewart or any other Massillonian was responsible for the Plain Dealer story, it would have taken no genius to figure out the C.A.C. could not possibly have paid its 1905 football debts from the often meager game receipts. Fortunately, Canton had many civic-minded businessmen willing to shoulder the losses just to get another shot at Massillon.

Cantonites insisted the Tigers were deep in the red too, but J.J. Wise released a statement showing \$16,037.90 in receipts and only \$16,015.65 in expenditures. He said he pocketed the \$22.25 profit for his efforts as manager. The only problem with Wise's figures was that he listed salaries, including railroad fare, at \$6,740.95, which means the players were getting only about \$50 per game. That might have been the going rate for some, but Kerchoffe, Mathews, Shiring, and a few others must have been paid bonuses by Massillon "angels." With that kind of accounting, the federal government could finish in the black.

No matter what 1905 had cost, it wasn't so much that either side was ready to throw in the towel. Both planned to go whole hog in 1906.

But, for a while it looked like there might not be a 1906 season.

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## 1984 PFRA Annual No. 5

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The problem was that football players kept getting injured and sometimes got killed. Newspapers showed a running count through 1905, and the final totals listed 18 deaths and 149 serious injuries across the country. Those figures wouldn't have amounted to much for some factories or many mines, but they were shocking for a sport.

Football was branded as brutal and many perfectly nice people wanted it outlawed.

A photo of Bob "Tiny" Maxwell brought things to a boil. Maxwell was a 250-pound guard of speed, courage, and ability and by far the most compelling force in the somewhat limited arsenal of little Swarthmore College when they took on the mighties of the University of Pennsylvania. Penn reasoned that by stopping Maxwell it would stop Swarthmore. To that end, they concentrated their attack on this talented but dreadfully outnumbered young man. By his own determination and perhaps miraculous intervention, Maxwell survived, but when he staggered off the field at the end of the game, he would have made the Hesperus look spanking new. At that moment, an enterprising photographer with an eye for the grotesque snapped Maxwell's picture, and when President Roosevelt saw it he gasped in horror. Here was the vigorous life run amuck! "Brutality and foul play should receive the same summary punishment given a man who cheats at cards," he said, in announcing that football must clean up its act or be banned by Presidential edict.

Columbia University stole a march on the President and dropped football (and it stayed dropped until 1915). Other schools began lining up to do the same. A tide of revulsion swept the country.

In January, after much wringing of hands and several false starts, a meeting was held of what eventually came to be the National Collegiate Athletic Association's Football Rules Committee. With the intention of eliminating or at least reducing the brutality in the game, they rewrote the rulebook just enough to placate most of the critics. And, almost incidentally, they changed the game completely and forever.

In the long view, the most revolutionary rule change was the brainchild of John Heisman, best known now for the trophy that bears his name but best known then as the successful and innovative coach of Georgia Tech. He proposed legalizing the forward pass, until then a maneuver contemplated only by the less-than-legal. Heisman correctly deduced that the pass could "open up" the game, but Walter Camp, college football's leading guru, opposed throwing the ball. Sir Walter usually got his way, but in this case the rulemakers were willing to clutch just about any straw. Henceforth, the tossing forward of the pigskin was to be allowed.

But legal or not, the forward pass was no panacea. As a sop to Camp, the rulemakers so fettered and hedged it with restrictions that at first it had only slight impact on play. Few teams gave it any real importance in their offenses and many teams ignored it altogether. Those coaches who were willing to experiment argued over the best way to hurl the ball. Some preferred end-over-end.

Of more immediate effect in reducing the game's gore were three other moves made by the rules committee. First, they clarified the rule that stated at least six men (later seven) had to be on the line of scrimmage, thus reducing mass plays. Second, they installed a neutral zone the width of the football between the two opposing lines. This cut down considerably on infighting, the occasion for so much "dirty" play. And third, in an effort to force teams to open up their offenses and abandon the grinding tactics that were both dangerous to anyone who got in the way and boring to anyone watching, they increased the yardage a team had to go for a first down from five yards in three tries to ten yards in three attempts. What this last move actually did was return the emphasis to kicking by making punting and field goals more common. In 1912, the rulemakers gave teams an extra down to make ten and so it has remained. Canadian football, incidentally, still retains the old three-for-ten rule.

The rule changes of 1906 did not "save" football as has often been claimed. As a matter of fact, the number of football-related deaths actually increased in 1906. But the changes did assure the public that the football hierarchy was aware of the problem and willing to make changes. The game was given a reprieve and eventually the necessary changes were accomplished.

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Cantonites still boiled about that Cleveland newspaper story, asserting C.A.C. insolvency when they got a second bit of disturbing news from Massillon: Ed Stewart

## 1984 PFRA Annual No. 5

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replaced Jacob Wise as Tiger team manager. Wise had other worries to take care of and Stewart, after coaching three straight state champions, was certainly his logical successor. But, over in a suspicious Canton, Ed Stewart's promotion was regarded with many jaundiced eyes.

To replace Stewart as coach, Massillon imported young Sherburn Wightman, late of Swarthmore and before that Chicago University. As a graduate of Amos Alonzo Stagg's system of football, Wightman was expected to upgrade the Tigers by imparting intricacies learned at the knee of the master.

Wightman needed all the cleverness he could command. Almost immediately he learned the Tigers faced 1906 without four of the big guns who'd helped them win in 1905. Worse yet, the four former Tigers would line up in the red and white of Canton.

Canton coach Blondy Wallace had taken a variation of the old saw "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em." Blondy's version read: "If you can't beat 'em, have 'em join you!" To that end, and by the time-honored method of offering more money, Wallace convinced quarterback Jack Hayden, tackle Jack Lang, guard Herman Kerchoffe, and end Clark Schrontz that they'd be happier in Canton. Schrontz had been the Tigers' field captain, Hayden and Lang were solid pros, and Kerchoffe was widely regarded as the world's greatest lineman.

Replacing any one of them would have been difficult; replacing all four looked impossible. Many Stark County football fans believed Wallace had bought himself a championship.

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Although the name "Bulldogs" is among the most honored in football history, no one is quite sure how it came to be affixed to the Canton team. They weren't called that in 1905 nor through most of the 1906 season. As late as November 4, editorial cartoonist R.C. Johnson of the Canton Repository was able to picture the Canton team as only a man with a club lying in wait for the Massillon Tiger. Most references to the team called it "Canton A.C.," "C.A.C.," or the "Canton eleven." Occasional variants were "the Red and White" or "Wallace's Men." Suddenly, almost overnight, they became the "Bulldogs."

Whatever the source, the image of a bulldog began appearing in editorial cartoons in both the Repository and the Morning News. For a month the name was on all lips. Then events transpired that brought the name into such disrepute that it would not resurface for a decade.

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The Canton season, to all important intents and purposes, did not begin until they had their new nickname. True, they played eight times between October 7 and November 4, but those were nothing more than warm-ups for the big games scheduled at the end of the season.

Kerchoffe and Hayden did not even join the team until the eight preliminaries were out of the way, but Canton had more than enough firepower to cruise through. Joining Clark Schrontz at end was Tom Thorpe, a 210-pound husky from Columbia University, who would one day become famous as an official. Wallace, Lang, and Jack Ernst shared the tackle positions. A 255-pound giant named van Raalbe, playing under the pseudonym "Riley," came from New York to star at one guard. Former halfback Ed Murphy, a solid 213 pounds, kept the other guard position warm until Kerchoffe arrived.

The center was possibly the only man in the world who could play the position on a par with Massillon's Big Bob Shiring. Although he gave away 70 pounds to the Tiger star, Lynn "Pop" Sweet's reputation as snapper-supreme equaled that of his larger rival.

Behind this fearsome line ranged several speedy halfbacks. The best-known of the crew was veteran pro "Twister" Steinberg, so named for his elusive running style. Dave Cure, who'd scored 135 points in 1905, lined up at fullback. Vince Stevenson, All-America from Penn, was signed to quarterback the crew, but he was injured in the third game. Steinberg ran the team from then until Hayden arrived.

The squad opened with an easy 57-0 win over Fredericksburg, a team guided by "Doc" Merriam who had played end for Massillon in '05. The most significant aspect of the game was that they played it on a Sunday, a somewhat revolutionary idea in 1906 Canton. The football management hoped that by playing on Sunday, when no colleges

or high schools would be similarly engaged, they might increase their crowds enough to cover some of the salaries of their talented players.

Two games were slated for the next weekend. On Saturday, the team took it easy in a leisurely 14-0 win at Moundsville, W.Va. On Sunday, they crossed Ohio to take on the Toledo A.A., a team of some slight historical interest because it boasted baseball's future "bonehead" -- Fred Merkle -- at an end position. Despite the ease with which Canton accomplished its 31-0 victory, the game proved costly. Vince Stevenson badly wrenched his knee. Although he pluckily finished the game and played intermittently during the ensuing weeks, he was really through for the season.

The game in Toledo drew 3,500, but the following Saturday only 800 showed up for a game at Canton against the Pittsburgh Lyceum. Obviously the home fans were not to be excited by the prospect of another one-sided victory. Ironically, the Lyceum gave Canton a fair tussle, even registering a first down on a penalty, before falling by only 8-0.

The next day, a 49-0 win over Benwood, W.Va. drew only slightly better. On October 27 and 28, Canton played its third consecutive two-game set. The pattern continued as the Saturday game saw another reasonably close score -- a 12-0 return match with the Lyceum at Pittsburgh -- followed the next day by another boring slaughter, 57-0, over the Broadway A.C. of Cleveland. The Sunday game at Canton drew the smallest crowd yet to Mahaffey Park.

For the first Sunday in November, Canton scheduled the Deering Maroons from Chicago. A strong pregame build-up of the Windy City visitors led Canton fans to expect a real game at Mahaffey Park, and the season's largest crowd -- still only 1,500 -- turned out in expectation. Deering was game but disappointingly small and Canton pushed them around with ease in still another massacre, 57-0.

After eight games, the Canton eleven was undefeated, untied, untested, and unappreciated. Only record crowds for the final games could keep the Red and White from ending deep in the hole. A widespread rumor held that the players had actually drawn little in salaries, the money being withheld to be bet for them on the Massillon games.

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At Massillon, the strength of the Tigers was in the center of the line. Local boy Fred Haag was still making good with his 255 pounds at guard and Big Bob Shiring held center in place at only a few pounds less. To replace the departed Kerchoffe at the other guard, Wightman imported an old friend -- Bob "Tiny" Maxwell, the Swarthmore giant whose photo had so outraged President Roosevelt. Wightman and Maxwell had been teammates at Chicago U. in 1903 and had gone off to Swarthmore together. Indeed, some cynical souls suggested that young Sherburn's primary coaching credentials consisted of his friendship with the tiny one, the inference being that Massillon took Wightman as a route to Maxwell. The prospect of the eighth-of-a-ton Maxwell meeting the equally large Kerchoffe on a grid of honor had Stark County fans slathering in anticipation.

E.P. King of Purdue and Ted Nesser, the Columbus strongman, made a competent pair of tackles. There was less than perfection at the ends, where Clark Schrontz was missed, Bullet Riley could bring speed if not much size to the wing position.

Several adequate backs were available to lug the ball. The big news was the signing of quarterback George "Peggy" Parratt, the same young man who'd caused such a stir in Ohio grid circles the year before when, as a senior at Case, he was first accused and then admitted to playing pro football. He was regarded as an excellent replacement for the Canton-bound Hayden.

Despite an undeniable degree of talent, the Tigers appeared slightly less impressive on paper than the hated Cantonites. But football games are not won on paper, and it quickly became evident that Sherburn Wightman ran a far tighter ship than did Blondy Wallace. Using more cohesive team play, the Tigers began knocking off the same kind of opposition faced by Canton and by even greater scores than the Red and White could roll up.

On Saturday, September 29 -- a week before Canton took the field -- Massillon treated the Pittsburgh Lyceum to a 19-0 lacing. A week later they embarrassed the boys from Muskingum College, 96-0. And, on the next Saturday, they took a happy jaunt over to Wheeling, W.Va., where they blasted the Benwood A.U., 46-0.

Although the performances to that point had bordered on flawless, a few nitpickers insisted they had seen some tiny imperfections at the end positions. This, however, was remedied when the Tigers met the Shelby A.C. on October 20. A young stallion named Walter P. East was installed at a wing slot. East had been hitherto known for his baseball endeavors; he was, in fact, the playing-manager of Akron's minor-league diamond squad. Against Shelby, he showed himself to be quite at home on a gridiron and his play was publicly commended. For fun, Ted Nesser was allowed to slip out to the other wing so that he might engage the attention of his older brother John who lined up at end for the Shelbys.

The most talked-about event of the day occurred when huge Maxwell gained possession of the football and rumbled 65 yards to a touchdown. With laughable ease, the Tigers downed the club widely regarded as the third best in Ohio by a 57-0 score.

On Thursday, October 27, as the Tigers thumped a combined Benwood-Moundsville squad at Massillon by 61- 0, Peggy Parratt returned a kickoff 100 yards for one touchdown and "walked" 65 yards to another when everyone but Parratt and the referee thought a play had been blown dead. Of historical interest, news accounts mention that Parratt completed one of those newfangled forward passes to Bullet Riley.

Peggy had practiced throwing the pigskin during the preceding summer, and it is likely he'd already tried out the new weapon in an earlier tilt. Nevertheless, this one is the earliest authenticated example of a pro-completed forward. Unfortunately for the stuff of legends, the toss gained only a few yards and played on part in the game's outcome.

Two days later, in one of the few tight games played by Canton, Townsend threw to Schrontz for seven yards to keep an important drive alive. Regardless of historical precedent, neither of these throws, nor a scattered few late-season tosses, gave much indication that the aerial game would ever become anything more than a showy curiosity.

Massillon ended October in a blinding rain and heavy mud at Toledo with a 49-0 slaughter of the local A.A. The Tigers geared up by hiring three-quarters of the University of Wisconsin's 1905 backfield to run the ball.

On November 3, a crowd of 2,200 -- far more than the Tigers had grown to expect -- came to the asylum grounds to watch them take on the Wilmington, Del. Orange, billed as one of "the top teams in the east." The Tigers waltzed to a 77-0 victory as the second half was shortened by fifteen minutes out of boredom.

One feature that occasioned interest was that several professional gamblers from Canton were given the privilege of the sideline by the Massillon management. Rumor had it that nearly all of the Canton gamblers planned to back Massillon against the Bulldogs, but that their speculative loyalty should earn them honored places near the Tiger bench surprised more than one observer.

Election Day found the Tigers enjoying a 33-0 picnic at Pittsburgh against the Lyceum. After the game, Massillon fans were surprised to learn that Akron baseballer Walter East had been released. East had played well, but subsequent signings convinced most observers that Stewart and Wightman were merely upgrading their squad. A more sinister reason for his departure would be announced later.

Meanwhile, all thoughts turned to the upcoming meeting between the Tigers and the Bulldogs.

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That the two pro collosi would never meet in 1906 was probably never believed by Stark County fans. Yet, for a while there was a distinct possibility that the rival managements would be unable to come to an agreement.

In early September, several weeks before either club began playing, Wallace and Williams met the Massillon braintrust at the Lakeside Country Club to start negotiations. According to Canton accounts, their offer was for two games -- one in Canton on October 31 and one in Massillon in December. Each home club would receive 60 per cent of the gate and the reserved seat rights.

Though this appeared an even-steven, tit-for-tat arrangement, Massillon came away screaming. In the first place, Canton's Mahaffey Park had a larger capacity and more reserved seats than Massillon's asylum grounds. Secondly, a game played under hoped-for ideal weather conditions in late October stood to draw far better than a contest in the feared ice and snow of December. If each team took 60 per cent of its home game receipts, Massillon would come up short.

## 1984 PFRA Annual No. 5

---

As three-time Ohio champions, the Tigers saw no reason to take a smaller slice of pie than the upstart Cantons. They announced the Tigers would take the second game only if it was played on Thanksgiving -- a day when every football fan in Stark County would presumably rush to Massillon no matter the weather.

Both sides stonewalled until October began. Then Wallace moved. On a quick trip to Pennsylvania, he signed Lang and Schrontz both to strengthen his team and weaken Massillon's. More important yet, he signed an agreement with the Latrobe team to play at Canton on Thanksgiving!

Latrobe had gone undefeated for three years. Led by the great quarterback John Brallier, the Pennsylvania champions were widely regarded as the only pro aggregation on the planet capable of competing successfully with Canton and Massillon. As a matter of fact, the Cantons had actually lost at Latrobe in 1905.

As much as they'd miss Lang and Schrontz, the loss of the coveted Thanksgiving date was a greater blow to Massillon. They dearly needed a couple of lucrative meetings with Canton to reduce some of the debts they were running up in player salaries. People like Maxwell and Parratt didn't come cheap.

Canton newspapers now insisted that Massillon was "begging" for a game at "any terms." This was overstating the case. Canton needed those games too.

Massillon strongly suspected that the announced Canton-Latrobe game was a hoax to force the Tigers to give in to less-than-equitable terms. They may have known what Canton fans were never told -- that Latrobe was having trouble putting a team together for 1906, and they were definitely not the same powerful club of the previous few years. The Tigers seriously doubted that any Canton-Latrobe game would ever happen.

But, indeed, Canton did expect to play Latrobe. The Red and White feared that Massillon would, in some underhanded way, spoil their Thanksgiving Day.

With both sides expecting some sneaky trick from the other, a contract was finally signed three weeks into October. The full text of this strange document appeared in the Canton Morning News of October 22:

This agreement made the 20th day of October, 1906, by and between C.E. Wallace, Jr., of Canton, Ohio, party of the first part, and the Massillon Athletic club (otherwise known as the Tiger Football team), unincorporated association of Massillon, Ohio, party of the second part...

That Wallace had become sole spokesman for the Canton team wouldn't surprise anyone familiar with his assertive nature. But it was a bit eyebrow-raising that the next section of the contract indicated a bargaining victory for Massillon:

That the parties hereto agree that their regularly organized football teams shall play two games of football with each other ... and shall share equally the gate receipts.

Not only had the Tigers won 50 per cent of the gates, but also both games were to be played in November. The Canton home game was slated for Friday, November 16; the Massillon home appearance would come on Saturday, November 24, the weekend before Thanksgiving.

Both sides "mutually agreed" that there had been "a general unwritten understanding at the beginning of the season" that they would play each other on Thanksgiving Day. But now that was impossible because Canton, had an "existing arrangement" with Latrobe. The use of the term "arrangement" probably indicated that no written contract could be produced by Wallace to prove that he really planned to play Latrobe. This, no doubt, heightened Massillon fears that they were being snookered.

Just what kind of trick they figured Wallace had up his sleeve is hard to say. Most likely, they assumed he would try to make some sort of capital out of the results of the two scheduled games. For example, if the teams split and Blondy suddenly offered to play the Tigers at Canton on Thanksgiving, Massillon would be under tremendous pressure to agree, no matter what kind of deal was offered.

The mutual mistrust found its legal form in the fourth paragraph of the contract:

Now therefore, in order to insure the carrying out of this agreement and, as an evidence of good faith ... it is hereby agreed that the one-half of the game receipts from said first game belonging to [Massillon] shall be deposited with and held by the Canton Savings & Trust company ... until after Thanksgiving, 1906, when, if the said [Canton-Latrobe game] shall have been prevented or in any way influenced or requested to cancel by [Massillon], then [Massillon's] half of said gate receipts from said first game shall be paid and delivered to [Canton]. In other words, if Massillon did anything to

## 1984 PFRA Annual No. 5

---

spoil the Canton-Latrobe meeting, they'd lose all of the money from their first game at Canton! But that was only the half of it.

And [Canton's] one-half of the gate receipts from said second game shall be deposited with and held by the Merchants' National Bank, of Massillon, Ohio, until after Thanksgiving day when it shall be paid and delivered to [Massillon] in case without fault of [Massillon] the said game between said Canton and Latrobe teams is not played on said Thanksgiving day....

So the cheese was binding. If, for any reason other than dirty work by Massillon, the Latrobe team failed to appear at Canton on Thanksgiving, the Red and White would lose all of its share of the second-game money.

The entire fiscal futures of both teams were staked on that Canton-Latrobe game!

In another part of the contract, each team agreed to put up \$3,000 as guarantee that they would appear on the November 16 and 24 dates. That was almost laughable. Both sides desperately needed the receipts from those two games -- and then some. Wallace and Stewart would each put eleven men on the field if they had to recruit from the street.

But the truth was, they were recruiting from among the best football players in the country. And, while that might increase the chance of victory, the high salaries such stars could command greatly decreased any chance of finishing in the black.

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Canton very likely put the best football talent on the field in 1905. But Massillon won. They did it primarily with smoother teamwork. Blondy Wallace had been out-coached or, at any rate, out-prepared by his Massillon opposite. That wouldn't happen in 1906, he vowed.

For two weeks before the November 16 meeting, Wallace sequestered his team on the campus of Penn State University. There he drilled them, drilled them, and drilled them some more. P.S.U. coach Tom Fennell gave them special instructions in the use of the forward pass. Back in Canton, some fans said that the great Fielding Yost had come down from Michigan to impart a few words of football wisdom.

Massillon stayed home, but Coach Sherb Wightman ran them through their paces with equal diligence. The Massillon version had Amos Alonzo Stagg sneaking in from Chicago to reveal his secrets.

The night before the big game, Wallace and his men arrived back in Canton. Hundreds of fans were there to meet them at the Pennsylvania train station. Hundreds more were waiting at the hotel. But Wallace hustled his team to their rooms and off to bed so quickly that those in the throng caught only fleeting glimpses of their heroes. Among those watching most closely were Wightman and the whole Tiger team, straining to spot any unexpected faces in the Bulldog entourage.

All Canton glowed with speculations about the Bulldogs' lineup, sure that Wallace would spring a surprise or two. Many claimed Willie Heston had been smuggled into the city, although Wallace had earlier stated the Michigan star would not be in the game. All night long the question was: "Who has Blondy really landed?"

When the teams finally lined up at Mahaffey Park the next day under partly cloudy skies and with a hint of snow in the air, the Bulldogs were almost a disappointment. No Heston! No real surprises. Kerchoffe was at guard, but he'd been expected. Other newcomers were an end named Gilchrist and two halfbacks who'd played for Canton in '05 -- Andy "Bull" Smith and Marshall Reynolds. Jack Hayden, the little quarterback who'd done so well for Massillon the year before, was in Canton's red and white, but he was only expected to sub for Stevenson. Then Stevenson wrenched his knee again during warm-ups and Hayden became the starter.

Massillon had a large new tackle in Otis Lamson of Penn, and Doc McChesney had come over from Pittsburgh to play end again. Homer Davidson, the great kicker from Shelby, had been signed only two days before. Although he was unfamiliar with the Tigers' signals, Coach Wightman paid him "a good salary" just to sit on the bench in case a field goal should be needed.

The Canton Repository estimated the Canton payroll at \$8,700 at Massillon's at \$9,000. The two weeks at Penn State, they said, had cost the Canton A.C. \$2,300.

It was the biggest game yet in Ohio, bigger even than the '05 game. As usual, there were rumors of "fix" in the air. Big games always brought out such whispers. Someone asked Massillon's manager, Ed Stewart, about them.

## 1984 PFRA Annual No. 5

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"Reports as to 'fixed' games originate in the statements of irresponsible parties whose ambition it is to see the Tigers lose, regardless of home pride," Stewart explained. He went on to say:

It would be impossible to 'fix' the coming football game. It would mean that the management was rotten to the core, that the Canton management was hand-in-hand with any such dishonesty, and that the forty or more players under contract to the two managements must be dishonest and minus all sense of honor. Such suspicion does discredit to an honest sport and is certainly an injustice to those connected with the teams.

Less than two weeks later, Stewart's words would be hurled back in his teeth.

Nearly 8,000 people made Mahaffey Park bulge at the seams. They saw a nearly faultless Canton football team. Jack Hayden and Marshall Reynolds were the main heroes for the Red and White. Little Jack ran the team faultlessly and dropkicked a 35-yard field goal in the first half to put the Bulldogs in front 4-0. Reynolds ran brilliantly, scoring a second-half touchdown on a nifty end sweep. During the opening half, his punting consistently kept the Tigers back on their heels as Wallace had his team kicking on first down most of the time.

"Big Bill" Edwards, Princeton great of an earlier age, had been brought in from New York to referee. There never was a question who was in charge. At one point, Wallace sent in a 215-pound substitute with a water bucket to relay some Wallace wisdom to the troops. Such clandestine communication violated the rules of the day and Edwards' sense of decorum. He grabbed the poor sub by the neck and threw him "ten yards across the sideline, water bucket, dipper, and all."

No pro game had ever received such press coverage. The Bell Telephone company even had men stationed in the grounds observing. As fast as a play was made, it was telegraphed to all the large cities in the country.

Near the end of the second half, Tiny Maxwell picked up a Canton fumble and saw a clear field ahead. He rumbled 55 yards to a touchdown. But that was the Tigers' best "offense" all day. The contest ended 10- 5, for the biggest Canton victory ever.

Wallace, Hayden, Reynolds and the rest could have been elected demigods by acclamation. The cheers of ecstatic Bulldog fans rang far into the night. Happiest of all were those who had demonstrated "fiscal loyalty" and collected some of the \$8,000 to \$10,000 up in wagers.

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Sunday night, after a respectable period of celebration, the Bulldogs entrained once more for Penn State. There was still a second game to be played.

"We will beat Canton with the same team that they defeated," promised Ed Stewart. The Tigers would not add new bodies to their roster. There was no truth to the rumor that Chicago University All-America Walter Eckersall had been signed to play quarterback. Next to Heston, Eckersall was the most famous football player in the country.

Blondy Wallace said he had not decided yet whether to sign Heston for the second game, but he was leaning against it. The magnificent Michigan halfback had been a flop for Canton in 1905. The news on Vince Stevenson wasn't good; the plucky quarterback was confined to his bed in Canton's Courtland Hotel with his injured knee. There was talk of sending for "Bonesetter" Reese of Youngstown, the famous bone specialist. The consensus was that Vince would recover but only after the season was well over.

Bell Telephone announced it would again telegraph a play-by-play account of the second game.

The Wheeling Intelligencer revealed that a movement was on foot to form a football league of ten or twelve clubs in Ohio, West Virginia, Michigan, and Indiana. The plan originated in Toledo and would be taken up in more detail as soon as the present season ended. Suggested team cities were Toledo, Detroit, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Massillon, Canton, Shelby, Akron, Lorain, Wheeling, South Bend, and Indianapolis.

But before a league could be formed, it was explained, the Bulldogs and Tigers would have to go.

No one believes that the Massillon and Canton people will long continue to pay such exorbitant prices for football stars. The only chance for the backers to get an even break is to win the annual game between the two all-star elevens, and this means that one or

## 1984 PFRA Annual No. 5

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the other city loses all the cash it can scrape. It is believed that the benefit of doing away with such evens can be shown the Massillon and Canton people so that in the future football teams more evenly balanced will be able to put up games more satisfactory to the public than those which have been seen so frequently this season.

From the Bulldog training camp came word of a new addition. Wallace telegraphed Eddie Wood, a regular end for Latrobe, and asked him to report to Penn State. Wood had been a successful pro for a decade and figured to fit in easily despite having only two days' practice with the team. Immediately after the Canton-Massillon game Wood planned to return to Latrobe.

The Canton Morning News commented:

The signing of Wood would seem to indicate that Blondy isn't very apprehensive about the game with Latrobe on Thanksgiving afternoon. When he is willing to confide the signals and the style of play to a Latrobe player, it looks as though he isn't very much afraid of Latrobe.

Meanwhile, Ed Stewart announced that "Big Bill" Edwards would be unavailable to referee because he'd be officiating the Yale-Harvard game. Edward Whiting of Cornell, who'd umpired the first game at Canton, would return and bring a referee with him.

By Friday night, a half dozen sports writers from Akron and Cleveland were nosing around Canton, picking up features. They had no way to know that the biggest story would break after the game was over.

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At last the day of the game!

The Haines Photo Co. of Conneaut photographed the asylum grounds in the midst of play. The view shows the 110-yard field lined off with the peculiar lengthwise lines five yards apart parallel to the sidelines that, together with the normal yard markings, turned gridirons into huge green checkerboards from 1906 to 1910. (The extra lines were used to judge the legality of forward passes, which had to cross the line of scrimmage five yards out from where the ball was put in play.) At either end of the field, American flags crown each upright of the goal posts. On the Massillon side, the open bleachers overflow except for a small section down near one end zone, where a skinned baseball diamond is visible. Across the field, there's no room left in the smaller Canton bleacher section, and spectators stand three deep behind the bench and from end zone to end zone. Perched on the outfield wall are hundreds more. Even the streetcars parked outside the wall have fans on the roofs. In the midbackground, brooding over all, is the state hospital.

Before the game even started, a rhubarb developed over the choice of a football. Massillon showed up with a Victor ball, one several ounces lighter than the Spalding ball Canton was used to. Wallace protested that Spalding was the norm, but Massillon was adamant. Blondy could either accept the Victor ball or forfeit both the game and the \$3,000 guarantee. There really was no choice.

Once play began, the reason for Massillon's preference for the Victor became obvious. Ed Stewart had promised to beat Canton with the same team he'd used on November 16, and, technically, he kept his word. All of the starting lineup had been in Massillon orange and black for the first game. But this time, Peggy Parratt was shifted out to end; Homer Davidson was at quarterback. Homer had learned the signals in the interim, but his primary responsibility was to kick the daylights out of the ball. The combination of the light Victor and Davidson's talented leg was overpowering. No fewer than six times punts sailed over the head of Bulldog safety Jack Hayden.

At first, Canton played into Massillon's hands by punting on first down, the strategy that had worked well in the first game. Davidson's punting made that idea foolhardy, as the Tigers gained on every exchange.

They also gained consistently around the Bulldog ends. That was a shock. Canton expected the Tigers to attack through the middle, and Wallace had ordered his ends to crash in. They were consistently outflanked. It was a literal case of adding insult to injury, as both Schrontz and Gilchrist were kayoed with hurts before very minutes had elapsed. That left only little Bert Sutter and new man Eddie Wood to man the barricades.

Midway through the first half, the Tigers got close enough to try unsuccessfully for a field goal. Undaunted, they roared down the field a few minutes later with a 73-yard drive

## 1984 PFRA Annual No. 5

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that culminated in a touchdown by Roseth, one of the Wisconsin backs. The goal was missed, but Massillon led 5-0 at the half.

Canton made some adjustments. When play was resumed, they got rolling and drove 47 yards to a touchdown, aided in part by a timely forward pass to Wood. A successful goal put the Bulldogs in front 6-5.

Back came the Tigers with a drive of their own, but they lost a fumble near the Canton goal line. Normal strategy called for Canton to punt out of trouble. Reynolds went back to kick, but one of the Bulldog ends was knocked into the path of his boot. The result was a safety. Massillon was back in front 7-6.

That seemed to take the spirit out of the Bulldogs. The remainder of the game was played on Massillon terms. Roseth touchdowned again, and Davidson's goal made the final score 13-6. The Tigers had survived their strongest challenge and reigned as state champions for the fourth straight year.

That night the team and their fans paraded by torchlight through the streets of Massillon. In a show of sportsmanship, Blondy Wallace joined the celebration, congratulating all concerned.

He would have been better served by staying home and grieving.

\* \* \*

In his book Pioneer in Pro Football, Jack Cusack, who would one day take the Bulldogs to their greatest success, described the evening's very different scene over in Canton.

I was a high school youngster of sixteen at the time, but I still have vivid recollections of what occurred in Canton after its team returned from the Massillon game. One of my neighbors, Victor Kaufmann, who later became a physician at Canton, had lost a heavy bet on the disputed contest. Victor was quite an athlete in his own right, covering every field from football and baseball to bike riding and track, and on that evening he took me with him to the Courtland Hotel Bar, where most of the Bulldogs had congregated to post-mortem the game. Arriving at the hotel, we went directly to the bar, where Kaufmann lost no time in making his feelings known, loud enough for all to hear.

"If you want to know what I think," he said, "I'll tell you -- I think that game was crooked!"

The fight that started in that barroom was as spontaneous as the lighting of a fuse on a powder keg. Somebody swung out at Victor, and men who had been arguing the matter only a few minutes before began punching each other all over the place. Tables were overturned, and the surging crowd crashed through the plateglass window and continued the battle on Court Street until the copper arrived, with their night sticks, to quell the rioters and haul some of them away to the pokey. Victor and I managed to slip out of the crowd and get away, but my friend went home in high satisfaction -- because he had gotten in some good punches in what he considered the right places.

The fight at the Courtland was only the biggest of the arguments and occasional fisticuffs that took place in Canton after the game that night. It's axiomatic that the bigger the game, the bigger and louder the accusations of foul play -- particularly from those who have lost wagers. Perhaps it is easier to believe in conspiracy than to acknowledge that one's own pre-game assessment was foolish. "I may have been wronged, but I couldn't have been wrong!" Such sour grapes seldom find their way into print. Although this had been the biggest game ever played in Ohio up to that time, all the "fix" gripes would no doubt have stayed in the bars and on street corners had it not been for a shocking development. In his Massillon newspaper on the Monday after his team's greatest victory, Ed Stewart charged that an attempt had indeed been made to bribe some of the Tiger players. Moreover, said Stewart, Blondy Wallace had been involved!

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To this day, nearly every book on pro football history says that Canton "threw" the second game on the orders of Wallace. Most histories indicate an unnamed Bulldog end as the main pawn in Wallace's scheme. Revelations of the "fix," it is agreed, destroyed pro football in Ohio for many years thereafter.

The single source of these allegations seems to be a little book published in the early 1930's called Pro Football: Its "Ups" and "Downs". The author of this book -- the first to

attempt a history of pro football -- was one Dr. Harry A. March, who'd served in several executive capacities for the New York Giants from 1925 and who later organized the short-lived American Football League of 1936-37. Dr. March practiced in Canton in 1906 and even tended to the Bulldogs as one of the team doctors. Certainly, goes the reasoning, the good doctor knew whereof he spoke.

The key passage in his book reads as follows:

After the second game, the Massillon Independent openly accused Wallace of trying to frame the games with the Massillon players and failing in this, had persuaded one Canton player to deliberately cross up his fellows and throw the game. When accused by his team-mates this player said he had simply obeyed orders as he was accustomed to do. At any rate he left town hurriedly, on the first train, in his playing togs -- his belongings following later -- maybe. Wallace sued the Massillon paper for libel but they had the evidence and the case was soon withdrawn, his own attorneys admitting the hopelessness of their contention.

Dr. March seems to have relied on his memory in describing events of a quarter century earlier, and his memory was less than faultless. As an example, he "remembered" the incident of the Victor football as occurring at the 1905 Canton-Massillon game, even though its use was crucial to the outcome of the '06 affair.

The player who "left town hurriedly" was obviously Eddie Wood. March gives the impression that he was running for his life from angry fans and teammates, but it had been announced before the game that Eddie would be scampering for the first train back to Latrobe as soon as the game ended. Moreover, when he returned on the following Thursday with the Latrobe team, he was not attacked. As a matter of fact, Wood had actually played well on offense, contributing to the Bulldogs' lone touchdown with a timely pass reception. On defense, he was less successful because he "followed orders" and crashed in, allowing the fast Tiger backs to escape outside. In view of Massillon's known up-the-middle strength, the orders seemed sound.

But, had there been a more sinister side to Wallace's strategies? The day after Stewart made his charge, a committee of fans descended on the Morning News. Some were suspicious; some were angry; some were only perplexed. They worked up eleven tough questions to ask Wallace. He fielded them easily, explaining for the umpteenth time about the Victor (he called it "phony") ball, and that Eddie Wood had been at end because Gilchrist was hurt. Sweet had not "quit the field in disgust" as had been rumored, but had only left exhausted when the game was irretrievably lost. Blondy had continued to use Hayden at quarterback throughout the game instead of substituting "Twister" Steinberg, who waited on the bench, because Hayden was a quarterback and Steinberg was a halfback who'd filled in for the easy games. He could have added that he had no faith in Steinberg's play-calling.

Most of the committee left satisfied, and, when the Morning News printed Blondy's answers, several fans came to him and apologized for things they'd said in anger after the game. Unfortunately, there was no satisfying such diehards as Dr. March or Cusack's friend, Victor Kaufmann. For them, there was no bad strategy, only bad men.

Perhaps that was why Dr. March mis-remembered the charge laid in the Massillon paper. Ed Stewart had not said the second game was fixed or the first game either. His accusation was that an attempt had been made to bribe some Tiger players before the first game. According to the Tiger manager, Tiny Maxwell and Bob Shiring had been solicited to throw the first game by Walter East, the baseball player-turned end. Maxwell and Shiring had dutifully reported the offer -- East claimed to be backed by \$50,000 in gamblers' money -- to Coach Wightman and the scheme had been nipped in the bud.

As soon as East's duplicity was revealed and before the first game was played, Stewart released the wayward end. Both games -- as far as Massillon was concerned -- had been played on the square.

The most damaging and sensational part of Stewart's accusation was that East had a partner -- Blondy Wallace. The exact wording contained a curious typo when "thief" was accidentally substituted for "they." It read: "East was the man who attempted to engineer the deal, with Coach 'Blondy' Wallace of the Canton team as an accomplice and thief were backed by a crowd of gamblers, who agreed to furnish \$50,000 to be used for betting."

The cloud was not what Dr. March and all the subsequent histories said it was, but it was still a cloud, and a very dark one at that.

Blondy Wallace was right under it.

\* \* \*

In some ways Blondy Wallace was his own worst enemy. He never made any secret of his taste for the fast lane. Few Cantonians were more familiar with or more welcome in the local taverns. He numbered among his friends many with shady reputations. And, when the boys on the team wanted some female companionship, Coach Wallace was known as the man to see; his enemies said he did more pimping than coaching.

Nor did his career after leaving Canton contribute to a retrospective image of a straight arrow. Dr. March said he became "king of the bootleggers" in Atlantic City and was for awhile under federal indictment. Unlike many of Dr. March's statements, no evidence has come to light to cast doubt on the bootlegger story.

Blondy's friends thought of him as a free spirit; his enemies considered him less than spiritual.

Had he been more of an All-American boy instead of just an All-American tackle, fewer Cantonians would have been willing, even eager, to believe the worst of him. But the question of the day was not whether he drank too often or stayed out too late or dallied too openly with ladies of the long evening. The question was whether this bon-vivant football coach would conspire with Walter East and the gamblers to bride members of the Massillon Tigers.

Ed Stewart said he had. In Massillon, Stewart was believed, of course. But, even in Canton where admiration for Stewart's word was surely a minority opinion, there were many who insisted they "knew it all the time."

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On Sunday, the day after the game and before Stewart's charges hit the street, Wallace told a Canton Morning News reporter that he did not favor a third meeting between the teams. That was a point in Blondy's favor since the whole plot, according to Stewart, had revolved around splitting the first two games to force a third. Wallace-haters simply assumed that Blondy had learned the cat was about to be let out of the bag and was covering his tracks.

Once Stewart made his accusation, Canton polarized. On the whole, the wisest heads adopted a wait- and-see attitude. Around the country, however, many newspapers picked up all or part of the charges. There was no way Canton could avoid a black eye, no matter where the final trail led.

On Wednesday, the day before Canton's scheduled Thanksgiving Day meeting with Latrobe, Manager George Williams of the Bulldogs could not be reached for comment. Word had it he was waiting until he could pick up Canton's posted guarantee and share of gate receipts from the second game -- a reported \$5,500 -- now residing in a Massillon bank.

The Morning News took Stewart to task for waiting until after both Canton-Massillon games had been played to make his charges. They suggested he had timed it so as to hurt attendance at the Latrobe game. They also noted that Massillon had admitted the word "thief" in the original accusatory story had been a typo; this, the Morning News felt, was a sign the Massillon people were "faltering."

George Williams apparently got the money on Wednesday night because he released a long statement to the newspapers on Thanksgiving morning. After tracing the origins of the '06 team and the negotiations for games with Massillon, he got to the important news.

"About 7:30 p.m., November 15, Mr. Stewart called me by telephone and asked me to meet him as soon as possible as he had a matter of importance to discuss," Williams explained. "As we were having trouble about a head linesman for the game the next day, I supposed he wished to discuss that. I suggested we meet at nine o'clock at my office.

"He arrived on time and asked me if I knew why Walter East had been discharged." Williams didn't. Stewart "then informed me that East had tried to make a deal with some of the Massillon players to lose the first game and win the second and that Blondy Wallace was implicated.

"I asked him to walk over to the Courtland Hotel and repeat what he had told me to Mr. John Rommel. At first he demured but finally accompanied me to the Courtland and met Rommel in the parlor. He repeated the story and when through I asked him how we

## 1984 PFRA Annual No. 5

---

could remedy it. He replied that the whole deal had been nipped in the bud by them and that their signals and formations had all been changed, so that there was no possible chance of East or Wallace being in possession of the new signals and formations."

Rommel asked the obvious: would it not be best to publish the whole story? Stewart was against it as that would hurt attendance. Besides, "their Coach, Mr. Wightman, would be placed in a position that East could gloat over, if Canton should win the first game and Massillon the second, but if it were reversed or either team won both games, it would be all right." Just why this should embarrass Wightman more than Stewart or the Massillon players was not explained.

Williams asked Stewart if the games were on the square as far as Massillon was concerned. Stewart assured him that they were and left.

"Our team returned at 9:50 that night and Rommel and I immediately got Wallace and went to his room. We placed Stewart's story up to him. He gave us every assurance that East had not given him any information and that he was in no way connected with any deal and that the boys were going out to win.

"I have every reason to believe that Wallace told the truth as to matters pertaining to the game. I believe that it was played on the square."

Before the second game, Williams again became nervous over reports that much out-of-town money was being bet on Massillon. Again he braced Wallace. "He informed me that the team was in fine shape physically, which was shown on the field the next day. With this assurance and the fact that the players asked for advance money, which they received and turned over to a prominent business man of Canton to be wagered on the Bulldogs, I gave my money to a party to bet for me." That the players had bet advance money with a prominent Canton businessman is at variance with another of Dr. March's assertions. He accused Wallace of holding the players' salaries with the promise of betting it for them on the first game. When Canton won, Dr. March stated that Wallace told the players he'd been unable to get any bets down and that he would put it on the second game. Instead, Wallace pocketed the cash, said March.

George Williams was the team's business manager; Dr. March treated the players for shin splints and muscle pulls.

Williams, in his statement, regretted that the Bulldogs had lost, but he believed everyone had done his best. It amounted to a vote of confidence for both the players and Wallace.

Stewart and H.A. Croxton, the prominent Massillon manufacturer known to foot many of the Tigers' bills, had another statement. They regretted "exceedingly" that it had "been necessary to air such a nasty mess." They completely exonerated Williams, Rommel, and all other Canton backers of any complicity in a bribery attempt. Blondy Wallace was pointedly omitted from their statement altogether.

The one person not yet heard from, and the one person who seemingly would have the most light to shed on the story, was Walter East. But his side would have to wait. He was out of town, supposedly traveling in the east.

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Fears that the scandal would hurt attendance at the Latrobe game led Canton newspapers practically to plead with the fans to show up. Those who did see the Bulldogs put on a fine show in winning 16-0. Steinberg was brilliant all day, and Reynolds featured with a 90- yard touchdown run on a fake kick. Eddie Wood started at end for Latrobe but left early when an official detected him slugging little Bert Sutter.

A crowd of 6,000 had been hoped for, but only a loyal 939 actually came to the park. The Bulldogs couldn't even cover expenses out of that, must less pay their players.

Williams and Wallace blamed the scandal for the small crowd, but that was probably not the whole reason. Once the team lost to Massillon, most casual fans just lost interest. If Stewart had said nothing at all, the attendance still would have fallen well below expectations.

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It was small consolation in Canton to learn that Massillon had also had a disappointing day. The Tigers had gone to Chicago to beat the "All-Western" team, a

## 1984 PFRA Annual No. 5

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crew of stars led by the great Willie Heston. Late in the game, Heston's pro career ended forever when his leg was broken in a fierce scrimmage.

From the Massillon point of view, the worst was the meager attendance of only 2,000. Obviously, Chicagoans were unimpressed with the Tigers' claim as Ohio champions.

The Canton Morning News confidently reported that the Tigers had cost their backers \$20,000 for the season and that such a loss would undoubtedly be the death of football in Massillon. Regardless of the size of the loss, the Massillon players had been paid. That was more than could be said for the Bulldogs.

Wallace announced a \$25,000 libel suit against Stewart, Croxton, and the newspaper publishing company. He claimed that "by reason of the libelous publication" he had been "injured in his business and profession and that his good name and professional credit have been ruined."

Blondy was broke.

So were his players. They had not been paid since the advance money they'd bet on the Massillon game. At long distance, the Pittsburgh Post described their condition as "frenzied." That was a bit strong, but they were stranded and penniless in Canton, relying on a few charitable friends for room and board. Some reports had the Bulldogs owing them as much as \$6,000. Wallace promised to get them their money, but they knew his situation. They could have easily gotten a judgment against Blondy, but that would have gained them only a meaningless piece of paper. Yet, they saw no hope in sitting around Canton waiting for Blondy to win his libel suit.

On Saturday, some of the Tiger players came over to join in a benefit game to raise money for the stranded Bulldogs. This third Canton-Massillon "game" drew about 500 fans, but, if they expected to see a real contest, they were sorely disappointed. It was nothing more than a burlesque, with some Canton players on the Massillon side and vice versa. Few players were in their normal positions and everyone was careful not to get hurt. A spirited practice would have been more exciting. The final, if anyone care, was 5-5.

Enough was derived from the charade for each stranded player to purchase a railroad ticket home, "with a glad remembrance that after he returns there he was a lucky man that he did not have to walk." Lucky or not, the players wrote a nice thank-you note to the "football public of Canton." It appeared in the Morning News and was signed by Jack Ernst, Paul Steinberg, and Tom Thorpe, representing the team.

That put a sportsmanlike finish to what had been a truly terrible week in Canton.

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Walter East returned to Akron near the end of the following week. What he had to say made headlines all over Ohio:

Upon my return from the east I find that a considerable unpleasant notoriety has been attached to my name in connection with the Canton-Massillon football teams, and consequently in justice to myself; and for the enlightenment of the public, I herewith present a statement of the case, without reserve. I shall not go into all the numerous details which finally terminated in an agreement with S.H. Wightman, coach of the Massillon team.

Incredibly, East accused Sherb Wightman of being behind the whole thing! According to East, Wightman had first asked East to solicit Maxwell and Shiring, then had East find a backer who would pay Wightman \$4,000, and finally at the last minute backed out of the deal.

Of crucial interest to Cantonians was the following:

I notice further that Wightman and the management of the Massillon football team charge Mr. Wallace, manager of the Canton football team, with being a party to the deal. If he was, it was wholly without any knowledge on my part. No member of the Canton football team or of the Canton Athletic association, were, so far as I know, connected with the deal in any manner whatever.

East went on to deny that he had ever been connected with other fixes in other places, as had been alleged in the original charge by Stewart. Furthermore, East insisted the only reason that Stewart went public at all was to ruin the attendance for the Latrobe game.

As proof that Wightman was at the root of the fix attempt, East furnished the Akron Beacon-Journal a copy of a contract in which Wightman agreed to have the November 16 game thrown for \$4,000. It was signed by East, John T. Windsor, one of the owners of the Akron baseball team, and Sherburn Wightman.

Fast on the heels of East's confession came another. John T. Windsor admitted to his part in the scheme, backing East in all particulars. He said he didn't know Wallace at the time of the attempt and still didn't.

To all except the most diehard Wallace-haters, Blondy had been completely cleared. Wightman was now on the hot seat.

He had an explanation. After reading East's charges, he gave an interview to the Cleveland Plain Dealer:

Anything and everything I did in conjunction with East and Windsor was done in accordance with instruction from Manager Stewart and the backers of the Massillon team. When East first came to me with his scheme I reported his proposition to my employers and they told me to go ahead with it and see to what lengths East would go.

Consequently, I strung them along until I had the signatures of East and Windsor down on paper. When that was done East was released, and it was seen that we had gold-bricked them. Consequently the great plunging of the first game on the part of the bettors did not take place.

East's statement does not worry me in the least, for I am innocent of any attempt to pull off any dishonesty.

Ed Stewart rushed to defend his coach, agreeing that Wightman had entered into the contract with East and Windsor at the behest of the Tiger backers in order to get the goods on the fixers. That explained Stewart's statement to George Williams on November 15, that Wightman would be embarrassed should the bribery attempt be made public and then the Tigers lose the first game. He knew Wightman's name was on a paper that said the game would be thrown.

What it didn't explain was why Wallace's name had ever been dragged into it at all or why Stewart chose to air the story at a time when it would do the most harm to Canton. George Williams and the other Canton backers knew why. They charged Stewart had deliberately set out to injure Canton football by destroying confidence in the team and ruining attendance at the Latrobe game.

"So long as Jake Wise had charge of Massillon's interest in sport, every statement made by him was always made good," said one Canton official, "and when he stepped down and out, in Massillon sporting circles, the people of that city lost the services of one of the cleanest and truest sportsmen that ever headed any organization. In the future, the management of the C.A.C. will be confined to baseball and basketball contests only, but no games with Massillon with the present crowd at the head of affairs."

In other words, so long as Stewart was there, Canton would not be, not even in basketball or baseball.

Actually, in retrospect, it seems they may have underestimated Stewart. He may have had a bigger haul in mind. Remember, had the Canton-Latrobe game been canceled, the Tigers stood to gain all of the gate receipts from the second Canton-Massillon game. There was always a possibility that the Canton players would believe Blondy was not on the square and quit the team before the Latrobe game. Even more possible, the Latrobe team, which was backed by the Y.M.C.A., might decline to involve itself with such sordid business and cancel. That neither of these possibilities occurred was not Ed Stewart's fault. As a matter of fact, the Latrobe team did indeed receive some criticism at home when they chose to go to Canton, but they were more roundly criticized when they came home without the money they were promised.

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The fix scandal wasn't the straw that broke the camel's back; there were already more than enough straws. Had there been no scandal at all, pro football of the quality played by the Bulldogs and Tigers would have surely ended after 1906. It had become far too expensive to place teams of true all-stars in the field week after week. The \$20,000 price tag the Canton Morning News put on the Massillon Tigers may not have been much of an exaggeration. The Bulldogs probably cost more.

Another problem, although a related one, was that football as played by star teams like the Bulldogs and Tigers was boring. No other teams could compare with them, and

fans soon tired of one-sided games. The fans showed up in large number only when the behemoths played each other. There weren't enough big games to pay the big salaries.

The fix scandal hurt the Bulldogs in particular, but they were already dead in general. An era was over.

On the other hand, pro football itself did not close up shop in Ohio, as many have written. It simply went on without colossi like the Bulldogs and Tigers. Most cities continued to field town teams made up of the best local athletes. Occasionally, they'd import a few ringers for big games, but in duos and trios, not in wholesale lots. In other words, most teams went right on doing what they had been doing for years. As far as most of Ohio was concerned, the Bulldogs and Tigers sank without a ripple.

Even Massillon put a team of locals into the field in 1907. For one big game they brought back Bob Shiring and Peggy Parratt, but for the most part they stuck with Mully Miller, Frank Bast, and others they had started with back in 1903. The "All-Massillons" did well under the excellent coaching of Sherb Wightman.

Neither Wightman nor Stewart had lost face in Massillon, and up in Akron, Walter East was generally thought of as having been the hapless victim of a crooked coach and a Machiavellian manager. No one got very upset when East was retained as manager of the baseball team. He lasted, as most managers, until the team began losing.

Apparently the only one who lost anything more than money was Blondy Wallace, the proverbial innocent bystander. His libel suit never came to trial. The reason was probably that he settled out of court, rather than that Massillon had some sort of secret evidence, as Dr. March alleged. With Wightman and Stewart under the gun, they would hardly have held back any facts that could have made them look better. At the same time, Wallace was too deeply in debt to turn down any reasonable cash offer.

Perhaps he should have gone to court. Because he didn't, there is no real end to the fix scandal. It just whimpers out in charge and countercharge. But, because Dr. March and his followers have had the "last" word for three quarters of a century, the name of Blondy Wallace has lived on in infamy.