

**The Chapel Hill Weekly**

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**SUBSCRIPTION RATES**

Inside Orange County  
 Per Year \$2  
 Outside Orange County  
 Per Year \$3

Entered as second-class matter February 25, 1925, at the postoffice at Chapel Hill, North Carolina, under the act of March 3, 1879.

**A Glaring Omission**

From a Washington dispatch to the New York Times about the cheating scandal at West Point: "The genesis of the scandal was definitely traced to the football team. There was some support for the surmise that, because of the extraordinary discipline at West Point and its parallel pride in a strong football team, the cadets who were on the football squad had fallen behind in their studies and thus were tempted to 'catch up' in an easy fashion." Another passage in the same dispatch: "Gen. J. Lawton Collins, Chief of Staff of the Army, told a group of Senators, that the infractions of the honor code had started with the football team."

It is positively established that the primary cause of the scandal at West Point was over-emphasis on football.

The newspapers have been publishing many pious editorials on the subject. I use the word pious because piety is, so often, associated with concern about other people's lapses from rectitude rather than about one's own.

There is one glaring omission in all the newspaper editorials that condemn and deplore the over-emphasis on football: they make no mention of the fact—and it is undeniably a fact—that a large part of the responsibility for this over-emphasis rests upon the newspapers. The great volume of space devoted to the game; the inordinate attention that the newspapers devote, not only in the football season, but all the year round, to the players, the coaches, the training, the schedules; the extravagant hero-worship in which the newspaper writers engage, and which they build up in others—all this ballyhoo is certainly a dominant factor in endowing football with the importance it has today.

The blame cannot—certainly the chief part of it cannot—be placed on the sports writers. They are specialists who, naturally, exalt their own specialty. And they are subordinates. The chief responsibility for the newspapers' great contribution to the over-emphasis on football is with the newspaper owners and with the high-up editors and managers to whom the owners delegate their authority.

**The Golden Age**

A passage in the opening chapter of ex-President Hoover's "Memoirs of Public Life," in Collier's, leads to reflections on the golden age.

It has been declared on good authority that the golden age exists only in the imagination. "From the days of the first grandfather," wrote James Russell Lowell, "everybody has remembered a golden age behind him." And read this from Macaulay's history: "In spite of evidence, many will still imagine to themselves the England of the Stuarts as a more pleasant country than the England in which we live. It is now the fashion to place the golden age of England in times when noblemen were destitute of comforts the want of which would be intolerable to

a modern footman, when farmers and shopkeepers breakfasted on loaves the very sight of which would be intolerable to a modern footman, when men died faster in the lanes of our towns than they now die on the coast of Guiana. . . . It may at first sight seem strange that society, while constantly moving forward with eager speed, should be constantly looking backward with tender regret." For this apparent inconsistency Macaulay had his explanation, which is too long to be quoted here.

Mr. Hoover, being in London in the summer of 1914, got the full impact of the shock caused by the outbreak of the First World War. He writes:

"I was not one of those subsequently know-it-all citizens who had seen war coming. There was not one person in a million who believed it possible.

"The previous 25 years had been the happiest period in the Western World for 10 centuries. Human slavery had long since disappeared. Freedom of speech and worship, and the right to choose one's own calling were gradually spreading over wider areas. Men were able to move across frontiers practically without restriction. Of all nations, Russia and Turkey alone required passports. Above all, fear had disappeared from the hearts of men. It was the era of the released human spirit.

"True, there was squalor, privilege, slums, slum minds, greed, corruption, and bad taste. But the transcendent fact was that these evils were recognized everywhere, and were being lessened year by year.

"There was a steady rise in the average standard of living and in the wealth of nations. Taxes were inconsequential. People were busy building railways and communications, roads and power plants, discovering new mines, erecting magnificent buildings, beautifying their cities.

"Scientific research was daily opening new frontiers of human progress. A thousand gadgets and laborsaving devices had taken the sweat off the backs of men and the drudgery from the work of women. The automobile had brought widened vision. The airplane was lifting man from the drag of the earth. Recreation and sport filled an increasing part of life. Public education was spreading. Art and music were becoming accessible to everyone."

Is this a fair review and a fair estimate? I believe it is. Despite all the assurances from Lowell and Macaulay and other wise men that the golden age is a creation of the fancy, a vision conjured up by the flight of time, there are millions of us, with memories long enough to take in the period just before the First World War, who agree to what Mr. Hoover says about it. Certainly we do not find in the record of the subsequent years any evidence to support the wise men's implication that every era is superior to any era that preceded it.

**Gill and Camp in Ohio**

Jim Gill and Jim Camp of the University's football coaching staff are attending the Ohio state coaches' clinic at Middletown, Ohio.

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FOR COMPLETE COVERAGE OF sports, national and international news read the News & Observer delivered in Chapel Hill. J. M. Pope, Chapel Hill, N. C., dealer. Phone 2-5574 or write Box 1325.

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FOR SALE: 1950 SURPLUS SET Encyclopedia Britannica, one-half catalogue price. Write "V.A.," Encyclopedia Britannica, Box 175, Chapel Hill.

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