

CHAPTER II

THE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The past sixty years have seen nearly eleven hundred athletic events that involved Bethel College athletes. Over five hundred athletes have participated under the Maroon and Gray banner. Accounts of these contests have been reported in the various daily and weekly newspapers. To date no one has compiled the results or analyzed them. Therefore the organized material is very limited and largely non-existent.

Dr. Peter J. Wedel joined the faculty at Bethel College in 1902 and served it in one capacity or another until his death in 1951. In his later years he gathered material and wrote The Story of Bethel College. He died before the volume was published. Dr. E. G. Kaufman resigned as president of the College in 1952 after serving in that capacity for twenty years. His long and intimate connections with the institution made him the logical person to edit and bring the gathered material up to date and assume responsibility for its publication.

The School and College Journal was one of the early Bethel College publications. In the February, 1897, issue the first reference to football is found. A team had been organized without the favor of the faculty or the board of directors. A later issue expressed the hope that football would be prohibited in every state of the union.¹

¹Article in School and College Journal, January, 1898.

In reviewing the early incidents and subsequent developments, Wedel summed it up this way, "In spite of objections and restrictions, athletic contests gained in favor with the students and assumed a more and more prominent place in student activities."²

The first Bethel College annual, Echoes, contained a cartoon that indicated the sentiment of the students regarding the condition of athletics at Bethel College. It placed the faculty between two fires: a constituency very definitely opposed to intercollegiate athletics on the one hand, and an over-zealous student body just as definitely favoring them on the other hand.³

The senior class of 1907 was instrumental in selecting the College colors, maroon and gray. These official colors were incorporated in the renaming of the College annual, Graymaroon.⁴ The athletic teams became known as the "Graymaroons."

The Graymaroon has been published annually since 1915. It depicts the various phases of college life. Pictures are the most prominent feature of the annuals, although valuable bits of history have been found here and there. Brief athletic records are frequently included in the condensed summary of events and activities of the year. One such event was the election of the first Homecoming Day queen in 1938. This occasion was named the Wheat Bowl Festival. Pictures tell

²Peter J. Wedel, The Story of Bethel College (North Newton, Kansas: The Mennonite Press, 1954), p. 128.

³Ibid., p. 150.

⁴Ibid., pp. 139, 495.

the story of the selection and crowning of the first Wheat Bowl Queen and her attendants. With this story are pictured the floats that made up the first annual parade.⁵ The annual homecoming activities since that memorable first one have made a definite contribution to student life and to the intercollegiate athletic program.

The Bethel College Monthly and Monats-blaetter aus Bethel College, English and German editions, were first published in 1903 as the official College publications. The two editions were consolidated after five years. In 1934 the Bethel College Bulletin replaced the Monthly as the official voice of the College. Its role was to supply the constituency with information and publicity, and the special feature was the alumni section.⁶ Through the years various items pertaining to the intercollegiate athletic program have been published. Possibly the greatest single release was the recognition given the basketball team of the year 1955-56.⁷ This team was the first Bethel College athletic team to win a Kansas College Athletic Conference championship.

A student publication known as the Bethel Breeze was first printed in 1915. The name was changed in 1921 to The Bethel Collegian. The student periodical is published bi-monthly. It features a sport section with brief accounts of the various athletic events. Occasional

⁵Bethel College, Graymaroon, 1938.

⁶Wedel, op. cit., p. 495.

⁷Bethel College Bulletin, January, 1956, pp. 9-10.

issues have pictures or stories about athletes receiving special recognition.

The Newton Kansan is a daily newspaper serving this area. Prior to 1945 this publication was known as the Newton Republican. The coverage given the College, and more particularly, the athletic program, has been generous. Accounts of the many athletic events have been printed and photographs have often appeared with the articles.

The major newspapers of the state have given the intercollegiate athletic program favorable coverage. Special articles have appeared at various times in The Wichita Eagle, The Topeka Daily Capital, and The Kansas City Star. Box scores and brief accounts of the athletic events appear in print the morning after each contest.

The official files were a source of valuable information. The score books contain definite information pertaining to the athletic contests and their administration. However, some of the information is very sketchy. This is especially true where early records are involved. Much of the early material is not organized. Through the years some valuable information has been destroyed or misplaced.

The Historical Library, located on the campus of Bethel College, was a valuable source of information. In addition to the many past publications and issues of the above mentioned literature, it houses official college correspondence, minutes of board meetings and committee meetings, and reports of various types. Some of this material pertains directly or indirectly to the men's intercollegiate athletic program. Many old pictures associated with athletics are among the valuable collections found here.

A source of information not in the printed form were the many athletes and coaches that have been a part of the program. Although only a limited number of human interest stories are included in this research paper, they did give additional background information to the researcher. A few of the very early athletes are still living. These men supplied the missing details to the early history of the men's intercollegiate program.