

“The Brutal Thirteen”: Brethren Nonconformity, Acculturation, and Race in Elizabethtown College’s Lone Season of Collegiate Football

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Abstract: The story of Elizabethtown College’s lone season of intercollegiate football, in 1928, offers a window onto the dynamics of Plainness and acculturation among Brethren in eastern Pennsylvania, since the college was then controlled by the Church of the Brethren. Brethren leaders opposed intercollegiate sports, and football in particular, as beyond the bounds of Brethren nonconformity and Plainness. Students organized their own team, outside official college structures, in what may be seen as a direct challenge to Plain values. Yet the team’s experience also complicates any narrative of early twentieth-century Brethren assimilation because the team did not merely mimic the sports culture of mainstream America and the patterns of nearby schools. The Elizabethtown team included an African American player and a player with a physical disability, both examples of inclusion that were surprising for the time and were many years ahead of neighboring athletic programs, and thus suggest not only currents of acculturation but also the presence of clearly countercultural values among the Elizabethtown College players.

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Plain communities are cultures of humility that encourage an understated demeanor and avoid competition and putting oneself first. Not surprisingly, after one Plain group, the German Baptist Brethren, began modest ventures into higher education in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these values ran into direct conflict with the desires of some students to form competitive, intercollegiate teams whose members wore flashy uniforms, competed for individual athletic records or accolades, and engaged in self-promotional behavior as the team captain or star player. Certain sports, especially football, carried the added taboo of physical aggressiveness that seemed to belie the peaceful and nonresistant stance of the Brethren community. Thus, the fact that an unofficial football team lasted only one season, in 1928, at Elizabethtown College in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, may not seem surprising, given that the college was governed by two districts of Brethren then known for their decidedly traditional ways. Yet the story of the nonconformity and acculturation represented by the team is more complicated than it first appears.

Several scholars have examined the acculturation of the German Baptist Brethren (known after 1908 as the Church of the Brethren) and loss of “plainness” during the course of the twentieth century. Sociologist Carl Bowman has traced these patterns at a national level in *Brethren Society*:



The Cultural Transformation of a “Peculiar People,” and Brethren pastor and historian Donald Fitzkee analyzed specific detail at the regional level in *Moving Toward the Mainstream: 20th Century Change Among the Brethren of Eastern Pennsylvania*.¹ College athletics provides a fascinating case study of the initial resistance to and then relatively rapid acceptance of change among the Brethren in eastern Pennsylvania, long known as the most traditional segment of the denomination. The story of the 1928 football squad at Elizabethtown College, a Brethren-owned and -controlled school, exemplifies these dynamics of resistance and change, but does so with several surprises. First, the team’s existence shows the lengths to which students, and some faculty, would go to play sports, by raising funds and playing semi-independently of the school. Second, the local newspaper coverage of the team, not to mention the campus journalism found in *Our College Times*, demonstrates that the Elizabethtown football squad of 1928, the so-called “brutal thirteen,” did not play under the radar or secretly from their disapproving elders; their games, and their description, put on public display the very aspects of the gridiron game that Brethren church leaders found most disconcerting. Unlike some examples of acculturation that Bowman and Fitzkee show to be subtle back-and-forth negotiation, the 1928 football season directly confronted Plain values. Finally, and perhaps most interestingly, the team itself was not merely a product of wider forces of assimilation into mainstream American culture or the mimicking of neighboring examples within the broader Elizabethtown community, but a genuine outcome of student desire to engage in and celebrate intercollegiate athletics as part of their college experience. This last point is demonstrated by the fact that the team included an African American team member during what historian Rayford Logan has called the “nadir of American race relations” and in a place—Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania—that had the characteristics of a Northern “sundown town.”² It was almost certainly the first in Lancaster County to field a Black player. In other words, the football team of 1928 challenged some deeply held habits of wider society. In this way, it complicates our understanding of the story of assimilation and change that was playing out within the Brethren community during the early twentieth century.

A Brethren College and the “Threat” of Football

Chartered in 1899, Elizabethtown College was a project of entrepreneurial members of the German Baptist Brethren who wished to deliver to “the children of members of the Church...an opportunity to obtain a more extended education than it was possible to acquire in the [local] public schools, and at the same time make it possible for them to remain loyal to the [values of the church].”³ Key among these values was plainness in dress and demeanor. The school’s first fulltime faculty member, Elizabeth Myer, was known for her adherence to Plain dress, and concern about “worldly” behavior at other institutions of higher learning, such as “hazing, fraternities, class

¹ Bowman, *Brethren Society*; Fitzkee, *Moving Toward the Mainstream*. See also Kraybill, “Crossroads of Modernity,” and Kraybill and Fitzkee, “Amish, Mennonites, and Brethren.”

² See the memory of 1941 graduate Charles C. Walker in Beadenkopf, *Quaker Behind the Dream*, 126.

³ Sharp, *Educational History*, 251.

rushes, etc.,” had been a major motivator of Elizabethtown’s founders, even though they also opened the school to students from any religious tradition.⁴

Not surprisingly, in 1904 when several students requested permission to organize sports teams, the school’s president, Isaac N. H. Beahm, demurred, stating that “modern match games of baseball and football are not in accord with Christian virtue and true education.”⁵ The college newspaper printed the support of an anonymous faculty member who praised Beahm’s decision as one that would be “welcomed by the sturdy, substantial citizenship of the country. It will be especially welcomed by those who are interested in the progress of true, Christian education, and the plain, simple, yet glorious doctrines of the New Testament.”⁶ It is interesting to note that this anonymous faculty member may also have been reflecting a wider cultural anxiety over the relationship of sports and Christian values. As pointed out by historians Tony Ladd and James Mathisen, traditionalist Christian leaders of many denominations believed that the development of a mass sports culture was contributing to an erosion of Christian morality. Whereas sports in general was once used as a tool for teaching character and Christian discipline, the professionalism, monetary temptations, and “win at all cost” mentality of athletes and institutions had soured the whole project, complicated further by issues of racial segregation and female participation in sports.⁷ Whether or not the anonymous faculty member was making a substantive criticism like this is unclear, but at least some students on campus agreed with the professor’s criticism. Junior C. M. Neff, for example, declared, “We are here trying to cultivate our mental abilities, and this can be done well only by excluding as much excitement as possible.... [Some students] do not think of exercising and developing their brains, but only their sinews. They think only of excelling in sports, and with that comes rowdyism.” By resisting intercollegiate athletics and allowing only intramural sports, “Elizabethtown College is an advance agent on inter-collegiate athletic reformation,” Neff asserted.⁸

Indeed, it may be easy today to forget that in the early twentieth century there was no guarantee that football would survive as an organized sport. From its beginnings as an offshoot of European games like rugby, football had a reputation as a violent, mob-linked sport. As the game developed popularity on college campuses in America, it often resulted in violent clashes among student groups with rising numbers of injuries, permanent deformities, and even death. One of football’s most visible critics was Harvard president Charles W. Eliot:

⁴ On Myer’s noted commitment to Plain dress, see Sharp, *Educational History*, 260. On behavior such as hazing at other institutions, see Sharp, *Educational History*, 251. On the school’s openness to non-Brethren students, see, for example, the 1906–1907 college catalog, which stated, “While being under the control of the Brethren, and primarily intended for the education of their own children, yet her opportunities are open to everybody, regardless of creed.” *Elizabethtown College Seventh Annual Catalogue, 1906–1907*, 7.

⁵ Beahm’s report to the board of trustees, June 15, 1904, appears in Schlosser, *History of Elizabethtown College*, 58.

⁶ Williamson, *Uniting Work and Spirit*, 52.

⁷ Ladd and Mathisen, *Muscular Christianity*, 88–91.

⁸ C. M. Neff, “Physical Culture,” *Our College Times*, May 1907, 16.

The game [of football] is played under established...rules, but the uniform enforcement of these rules is impossible...disabling opponents by kicking and by heavy blows on the head...blows about the eyes, nose, and jaw, are unquestionably helpful to a triumph, and no means of preventing them by both players and coaches has yet been found.... No sport is wholesome in which ungenerous and mean acts, which easily escape detection, contribute to victory.... The main objection to football [in my opinion]...lies thus against its moral quality.⁹

And President Eliot was not alone in this sentiment. In 1894, the annual football match between Harvard and Yale had been suspended due to the severe injuring of four players. In 1905, the same year as Eliot’s statement on the barbarity of football, the president of the University of California, Benjamin Wheeler, led a national campaign with other college presidents to ban the sport at both the collegiate and secondary school levels. Stanford University president David S. Jordan called football rugby’s “American pervert” and viciously attacked the sport in the press, citing it as “the heaviest burden yet borne by higher education in America.”¹⁰ Despite efforts by the Intercollegiate Football Rules Committee and its chairman, Walter Camp, the “father of American football,” to institute some safety and reform measures throughout the game, early college football remained extremely violent, as frightfully demonstrated in the 1897 death of University of Georgia fullback Richard Gammon, who died from a severe concussion during a game against the University of Virginia.¹¹ With the rise of the Progressive Era of the early 1900s, such loss of life at the expense of a game was deemed unacceptable by critics, even by such avid football devotees as President Theodore Roosevelt (whose eldest sons played the sport at Harvard) and President Woodrow Wilson (a fan of Yale’s football program). Eventually, reform would arrive in the form of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), which would refine football’s rules and make the game safer for participants. Such developments lay in the future, but in any case, Elizabethtown’s Brethren trustees had no time for football or any other intercollegiate athletics at the school.

Opposition to competitive, intercollegiate sports actually deepened after 1917 when ownership of Elizabethtown College shifted. Initially, it had been a private school run by a board whose members were committed members of the Church of the Brethren. But in 1917, the college was transferred to direct church control. Two geographic districts—the Eastern Pennsylvania and Southern Pennsylvania Districts of the Church of the Brethren—now directly appointed the school’s board and controlled school policy. Significantly, these two districts were the Plainest and most traditional of all the districts in the denomination. In 1911, the relatively more progressive Brethren congregations in the Philadelphia area had separated from the Eastern Pennsylvania District to form the new Southeastern District, which left the remaining Eastern Pennsylvania District even more traditionalist in outlook.

⁹ Eliot, “President Eliot on Football,” 188.

¹⁰ Scott, “When Rugby Ruled.” See also Park, “From Football to Rugby,” 5–40.

¹¹ Watterson, “Football Crisis of 1909–1910,” 34; Meyers, ““Unrelenting War on Football.””



Elizabethtown College Board of Trustees, ca. 1923.
(Photo courtesy of Hess Archives, Elizabethtown College)

As a result of these 1917 changes in ownership, the scope for tampering with the college's Plain parameters seemed even narrower. In 1926, for example, the minutes of the Eastern District of the Church of the Brethren proclaimed that "it is the aim of the management [of the college] to live up to the ideals of the constituency" by only allowing "outdoor athletics on the interclass basis and refusing to have intercollegiate athletics function." Baseball, tennis, croquet, and volleyball were acceptable "recreational activities" for students among themselves and as part of physical education, but not in the form of organized, competitive teams suited up to play other schools.¹² Intramural baseball began as early as 1905 and, after the construction of Rider Memorial Hall in 1906, students occasionally played basketball in the building's basement, though there was no place for spectators other than standing "on a narrow stairway leading" down to the cellar. Sport was to be a form of exercise, not entertainment. Moreover, "players of both sexes" were required to wear "regular clothing in the games" and not athletic attire.¹³

¹² *Minutes of the Sixtieth Regular District Meeting [...]*, 9.

¹³ Schlosser, *History of Elizabethtown College*, 59, 78.

Football in any form—even intramural and merely recreational—was another matter, however, and off limits. On October 27, 1927, the college board of trustees issued a ten-paragraph statement against the game, describing it as “brutal and unchristian.” The sport does not aid “in the development of the physical” but produces “crippled bodies” and “most athletes [who play football] die comparatively young,” they asserted. The trustees also rejected the argument that the college should field a team to demonstrate a “clean, fair” game “on the ground that a game that is fundamentally wrong because it is brutal...cannot be cleaned up.”¹⁴

Again, Brethren concerns were not entirely unique. Debate over the brutality and alleged godless nature of football had been taking place at other religious universities well before the Brethren of Pennsylvania took up the dispute. Within the Deep South, Methodist, Baptist, and other religiously affiliated universities and colleges had taken exception to the sport as early as the first decade of the twentieth century. As historian William Baker points out, leaders at these schools cringed at the thought that “the gridiron game tended to remove campus respect from the head of the scholar to ‘the quilted, bepadded, disheveled, long-haired, begrimed, scarred football hero’ who had done nothing more noble than survive a ‘savage scrimmage in the mud.’”¹⁵ Universities and colleges that had football programs, such as Vanderbilt, North Carolina, and Emory, placed lengthy lists of rules and restrictions on the lives of players and the operations of the programs, such as behavior codes and travel restrictions.¹⁶ However, by the 1920s, the attitudes and viewpoints of these moralistic institutions of higher learning had started to change due to the encouragement of physical fitness and readiness, especially among young men during the years of World War I, as well as the explosion in American leisure time and desire for sporting entertainment brought on by the postwar economic boom. These colleges and universities, which once warned against the immorality of football, now saw dollar signs as college football in the South became not just a matter of regional pride, but a major moneymaker for higher education. As Baker put it, “Religion, football, and regional pride linked arms in a world of newfound affluence.”¹⁷ At Elizabethtown College, the physical education push and the desire for moneymaking athletic competition had not impacted daily life on campus deeply enough to sway it from its traditionalist roots, in part because, during World War I, the nonresistant (pacifist) Brethren had been on the sidelines of the military fitness campaign.

The one exception to intercollegiate competition at Elizabethtown was a debate team, since it was regarded as contributing to students’ academic skills. Although the board rejected intercollegiate debate in 1917, it cautiously extended approval in 1922, and the next year a team debated students from Ursinus, Juniata, and Western Maryland Colleges. One member of that initial intercollegiate debate team was Daniel E. Myers, son of noted Brethren elder Samuel B. Myers Sr. of the historic Codorus Church of the Brethren in York County. After graduating from Elizabethtown in 1925, Myers would head to Columbia University for graduate school and then

¹⁴ Schlosser, *History of Elizabethtown College*, 145–147, reproduces the trustees’ text.

¹⁵ Baker, *Playing with God*, 96.

¹⁶ Baker, 97–99.

¹⁷ Baker, 106.

return to his alma mater as a professor of math and physical education—and a faculty voice for intercollegiate athletics.¹⁸ He would also become one of the main faculty drivers for the incorporation of football at the college—a “founding father” of what would become the “Elizabethtown Extension School” team.

The “Elizabethtown Extension School” Football Team

Against this background of Plain Brethren opposition to intercollegiate athletics, a number of the school’s students, both Brethren and non-Brethren, nonetheless pressed for the establishment of a team to play intercollegiate football. In 1926, an independent student group organized to advance the interest of sports. Calling themselves the Elizabethtown College Athletic Association, the group elected student William Sweitzer its first president. Born in 1905, Sweitzer hailed from New Freedom, Pennsylvania, and the Brethren Sweitzer and Zeigler families of York County. He had carved out a reputation for himself as a popular student as well as a tremendous athlete, participating in intramural basketball and track and field. “If ‘Bill’ has any enemies, we have yet to hear about them,” read the text with Sweitzer’s graduation profile in the 1928 college yearbook. “His friends are legion.”¹⁹ The popular Sweitzer wasted no time in making a “frank and straightforward appeal” to the college’s athletic community for football on campus at the association’s annual meeting in 1927, which was held in the college chapel.²⁰

It would be at this annual meeting that Sweitzer and Myers would meet formally and bond over their shared interest in the gridiron.²¹ Myers represented a progressive element within the Church of the Brethren²² and, like Sweitzer, Myers believed that the college would benefit from having a football program and seemed surprisingly optimistic that the board of trustees would agree with Sweitzer’s request.²³ It is unclear where Myers’s support of football at the college came from, though during the 1920s he attended graduate classes at Columbia University, an Ivy League football powerhouse. Despite Myers’s optimism, the Elizabethtown College board of trustees and the school’s president, Henry K. Ober, who was also a minister at Elizabethtown Church of the Brethren, were not as bullish about the idea of a football team as Myers and Sweitzer had hoped. In the 1927–1928 edition of the *Elizabethtown College Bulletin*, school administrators explained that the board had “ruled against inter-collegiate athletics [like football] because it does not deem it in accord with true education, nor with that high Christian character which the college is to promote,” and as a result, “football should not be permitted as a game on the college grounds.” “Moral character and Christian manhood and womanhood,” the *Bulletin* said, “are esteemed more...than physical soundness.”²⁴ Indeed, the trustees countered the student athletic association

¹⁸ Schlosser, *History of Elizabethtown College*, 77, 111–112.

¹⁹ *The Etonian*, 1928, 55.

²⁰ “Prospects Bright for Football,” *Our College Times*, September 15, 1927, 1; Williamson, *Uniting Work and Spirit*, 111.

²¹ “Prospects Bright for Football,” *Our College Times*, September 15, 1927, 1.

²² “Physical Director, D. E. Myers,” *Our College Times*, December 1, 1927, 1.

²³ “Prospects Bright for Football,” *Our College Times*, September 15, 1927, 1.

²⁴ *Elizabethtown College Bulletin, 1927-1928*, 61.

by noting that “an urgent request comes from an alumnus just out of school that the brutal and unchristian game [of football] be forbidden. Other alumni are protesting as well as a large percentage of our constituency.” The trustees explained that they supported athletic endeavors that “fostered...physical development, not for a few, but all students,” a jab at the popular game’s narrow focus on strong male athletes and the limited number of players on the field at any one time.²⁵

Despite these rebukes, Sweitzer and Myers were not deterred. Perhaps they took inspiration from the adoption of football at Juniata College, another Pennsylvania institution with Brethren roots. In the early twentieth century, a similar lobbying effort for football had been carried out there. “Football has not had much of a part in Juniata’s past,” the *Juniata Echo* had reported in April 1916, “but a [football] team...is to be looked for in the near future. As she [Juniata College] has excelled in all other lines of athletics there is no reason to doubt that ere long she will be found in the front ranks of football.”²⁶ By 1920, enough Juniata students and alumni had peppered the college with letters of support and raised enough funds to outfit a full team, and the Juniata College board of trustees sanctioned the sport on campus.²⁷ Significantly, however, Juniata College, although founded by Brethren, was not owned by the church, so it was not bound by the same dictates of Plainness and nonconformity as was Elizabethtown.²⁸

Sweitzer and Myers decided that since neither the college nor the Eastern and Southern Pennsylvania Districts of the Church of the Brethren were willing to support bringing football to College Hill—the nickname for the Elizabethtown College campus—they would do so on their own, find practice space, and cultivate popularity for the game among the student body. Interestingly, the team would be known as the Elizabethtown Extension School football team, a name that may simply have been a clever way for the players to distance themselves from campus or a serious strategy to buy themselves some plausible deniability should the college and church try to squelch their efforts. Like other colleges at the time, Elizabethtown offered “extension courses” for students who could not study on campus. Typically, these individuals were schoolteachers who had passed the county teacher certification exam but lacked a full college degree. They completed their degree by taking summer term classes and by enrolling in “extension courses,” in which they met independently with an approved instructor off campus (generally near their home) rather than on campus. In a sense, the “extension work” of the college was an early form of distance education. By naming football an “Extension School” sport, the team was signaling that it was an independent, off-campus activity.²⁹

²⁵ Schlosser, *History of Elizabethtown College*, 146.

²⁶ S. Ethel Trostle, “A Student’s View of a ‘Greater Juniata,’” *Juniata Echo*, April 1916, 62.

²⁷ V.B.R., “Rah! Rah! Rah! Football,” *Juniata Echo*, October 1920, 211. The Juniata football program remains an important part of Juniata College’s campus life today, playing in the NCAA Division III Centennial Conference and holding four conference championships.

²⁸ Lehman, *Beyond Anything Foreseen*, 97.

²⁹ Extension courses and extension students are listed as early as 1910 in Elizabethtown College catalogs. The number of extension credits allowed to count toward graduate began to be limited after 1927. A typical explanation of extension courses comes from the 1930–1931 *Bulletin*: “Teachers in service and others who

Sweitzer and Myers were also well positioned to lead this football experiment at Elizabethtown College. As a star athlete and popular student figure, Sweitzer could gain access to different student groups and recruit local men with playing experience. Myers was a Brethren faculty member and early proponent of intramural student sports on college campuses and could provide both a knowledge of and an air of legitimacy to the extension team's labors.³⁰ Sweitzer and Myers's first move was to approach Elizabethtown College athlete A. Warren "Red" Angstadt to act as the team's head coach. Born in 1907, Angstadt grew up in nearby Steelton, Pennsylvania, where his father worked at the local steel works. In a 1983 interview, Angstadt credited this rough industrial environment for fostering his love of sports. "I was always interested in outdoor sports," he said, "We [the neighborhood kids] were always out in the street hitting a ball with a piece of wood and getting into trouble."³¹ When his family moved to Elizabethtown, Angstadt, as a high school freshman, became part of the first football team to play at Elizabethtown Area High School, which went 2–3 in their first season in 1922 under head coach Fred Klein. He also excelled in high school at basketball, track and field, baseball, and tennis. It would be this final sport that would be Angstadt's ticket to collegiate athletics after graduation, first at Juniata College and then at Elizabethtown. In addition to his experience with the fundamentals of football, it was Angstadt's role on the Elizabethtown College men's tennis team, an intramural sport given lukewarm support by the trustees so long as it found its own funding, that provided him the experience of raising and outfitting an athletic team from scratch.³²

Once Angstadt was on board with the football experiment, interest in building an independent team at Elizabethtown College began to grow among students. "Football advocates are taking advantage of the new [athletic] field [on campus]," reported the student newspaper *Our College Times*, "[They] are really enthused about the 'Great American Sport.' It is thought that we will soon have a few players like 'Red' Grange [the famed University of Illinois and future NFL Hall of Fame halfback]."³³

can qualify for entrance to college may enroll for courses at such points where there is a sufficient number to justify the organization of a class. Extension work will not be considered as satisfying residence requirements, nor will more than twelve semester hours of extension work be accepted during any academic year as credit toward a degree." *Elizabethtown College Bulletin, 1930–1931*, 23.

³⁰ "Physical Director, D. E. Myers," *Our College Times*, December 1, 1927, 1.

³¹ "Pigskin Memories," *Intelligencer Journal*, October 26, 1983, Northwest Extra, 1, 5.

³² "Pigskin Memories," 1, 5.

³³ "Athletic News," *Our College Times*, October 15, 1927, 3.



The 1928 Elizabethtown Extension School Football Team.
(Photo courtesy of Hess Archives, Elizabethtown College)

On the surface, the team that Angstadt, Sweitzer, and Myers put together was a motley bunch, but they had some talent, a few surprises, and some history-making potential. Practices began in September 1928 at the Klein Factory Athletic Field behind Elizabethtown High School, with a planned five-game schedule on tap, pitting Elizabethtown against four college squads and one high school team. Brethren student Walter W. Eshelman was the team manager, and Nissley Chapman, a student associated with the college’s fledgling intramural track and field program, signed on as an equipment manager, picking up the challenging task of getting basic football gear.³⁴ “We only had thirteen helmets and [the college] thought the game was brutal,” remembered Angstadt in 1983.³⁵ Donations covered the team’s travel expenses, which were considerable since they lacked a home field and would have to play the majority of their games on the road.³⁶

According to published media reports, initial practices involved about twenty-five eager players, not all of them, it seems, from Elizabethtown College itself.³⁷ Some of the players who came out for the football squad came with high school and college football experience, and a few were local boys who had played with Angstadt on the Elizabethtown High School team. Richard Heistead was a local player who had started at the Augusta Military Academy in Texas. Paul Fisher was a popular fullback known for his speed and size. “[Fisher] is considered one of the fastest men

³⁴ “Punts and Passes,” *Intelligencer Journal*, September 15, 1928, 13; and “Open Forum: Football in the Past,” *Our College Times*, April 25, 1929, 2.

³⁵ “Pigskin Memories,” *Intelligencer Journal*, October 26, 1983, Northwest Extra, 1, 5.

³⁶ “Open Forum: Football in the Past,” *Our College Times*, April 25, 1929, 2.

³⁷ “Punts and Passes,” *Intelligencer Journal*, September 15, 1928, 13.

on the team and a demon with the ball,” wrote the *Lebanon Daily News*.³⁸ Guard Earl Wagner, halfback Benjamin Hoffman, and defensive end Harry Bower (who had earlier played football at Juniata) were all products of the local Elizabethtown High School football program. “The [Elizabethtown] line will average about 165 pounds per man,” wrote the Lancaster *Intelligencer Journal*, “and the backfield will be filled with fast experienced men.”³⁹ Angstadt would play first as the starting quarterback but later switch to the offensive line.

Not Simply a Story of Acculturation

The most interesting additions to the Elizabethtown Extension School’s football roster were two players who, by their very existence on the field, made this team unique and possibly historic. One was William Miller Barbour, known as Miller Barbour by his peers. Barbour had come to Elizabethtown College from nearby Middletown, where he had played high school football as a halfback and would later play on Elizabethtown College’s men’s basketball team. Born in 1907 in Plymouth, Pennsylvania, he was an academically strong student who served on the college’s debate team, loved poetry (particularly the verse of Lord Byron), and devoured English literature by the volume. Significantly, Barbour was an African American. Nationally, college football’s color barrier had been broken in the 1890s, but many white college and university clubs were still reluctant to allow Black players onto their rosters.

Elizabethtown College’s first Black student, Charles Jenkins, had enrolled in 1926, and by 1928 when the football team organized, there were three African American students enrolled, all from the Harrisburg-Steelton area, including Barbour. The everyday experience of Black students at the college in the early twentieth century is hard to characterize with certainty. Based on his peers’ comments in *The Etonian* yearbooks during Barbour’s 1928–1932 tenure at the college, he was well liked and included in a host of clubs and other organizations. Yet casual racism was also likely a real part of his experience. While the Church of the Brethren had taken a clear stand against slavery in the nineteenth century, it was not a denomination with a particularly remarkable or progressive record on race relations by the early twentieth century.⁴⁰ In 1907, the school had brought Black poet and novelist Paul Laurence Dunbar to campus.⁴¹ Three years later, student Tillman H. Ebersole had written an essay for the Elizabethtown College newspaper arguing that African Americans were no different from whites and that, given opportunity for education and economic advancement, “[t]he American Negro’s ability to rise in the scale of civilization is, in a large degree like the white man’s, unlimited.”⁴² At the same time, photos from campus events suggest that occasional blackface entertainment and racial stereotypes of the “happy-go-lucky...Negro” appeared in the school paper as well.⁴³ The broader context of the 1920s, including

³⁸ “Elizabethtown Will Be Here Saturday,” *Lebanon Daily News*, October 11, 1928, 10.

³⁹ “Punts and Passes,” *Intelligencer Journal*, September 15, 1928, 13.

⁴⁰ Bowman, *Brethren Society*, 86.

⁴¹ Williamson, *Uniting Work and Spirit*, 54.

⁴² Tillman H. Ebersole, “The Negro in America,” *Our College Times*, June 1910, 7–9.

⁴³ “Negro Life to Be Presented by Anne Frierson, February 4,” *Our College Times*, January 22, 1931, 1

in Pennsylvania, was one of racial discrimination, with a record number of lynchings nationally and increasing housing discrimination in northern towns and cities in response to the Great Migration of southern Blacks to the North.⁴⁴ As the famed Pennsylvania-born scholar and academic Alain Locke wrote in 1925, “These external and internal forces [of segregation, discrimination, and violence] have gradually created a state of mind among Negroes which is rapidly becoming more pronounced...just so long as one Negro can be made a victim of prejudice because he *is* a Negro, no other Negro is safe from that same oppression.”⁴⁵

That context made Barbour’s inclusion in the Elizabethtown team notable and ran against the social grain of the day. While African Americans had been attending Lancaster County’s Millersville State Teachers College (today, Millersville University) as early as the 1890s, no evidence of African Americans participating in Lancaster County collegiate football—apart from Barbour’s 1928 time on the Elizabethtown team—surfaces until 1949 when Charles “Cake” Alexander, who would go on to be a well-respected Temple University coach, began playing varsity football for Millersville.⁴⁶ The only other collegiate football program in the county was at Franklin & Marshall College, which did not admit African American students until 1946, and the first reference of an American-American player there is from 1958.⁴⁷ Barbour’s inclusion on the Elizabethtown College men’s basketball team was also a first, as no evidence exists of an African American playing intercollegiate basketball in Lancaster County prior to him. Indeed, it seems that Miller Barbour was breaking athletic color barriers in the region, symbolically opening a way for other local African American athletes, such as 1948 Olympic sprinter Barney Ewell and running back Doug Dennison, a Super Bowl-winning player of the 1978 champion Dallas Cowboys.

Equally interesting was the Elizabethtown team’s center, A. C. Boltz. While little is known about this young man today, Boltz was an Elizabethtown native and a graduate of the local high school who had played some semi-pro baseball in 1927. What was amazing about his athletic performance in both his baseball and football roles was that that he had only one arm. Despite this physical difference, Boltz locked down the center of the offensive football line with unbelievable skill. “It was learned that this one-armed boy against opposing centers is a terror and must be watched,” wrote the *Lebanon Daily News*. “[He] simply [toys] with his opponent and [pushes] him all over the field.”⁴⁸ In his own way, Boltz was also blazing a trail for athletes with physical disabilities, like future running back Rocky Bleier of the Pittsburgh Steelers and kicker Tom Dempsey of the New Orleans Saints.

The Elizabethtown Extension School roster may have struck others as a jumbled crew of college students and wayward players, but over the next few weeks the team would pull together,

⁴⁴ Tuskegee University Archives. “Lynchings Stats Year Dates Causes.” Uploaded January 14, 2021. <https://archive.tuskegee.edu/repository/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Lynchings-Stats-Year-Dates-Causes.pdf>.

⁴⁵ White, “The Paradox of Color,” 366.

⁴⁶ Ashley Sherman (Millersville University archivist), email message to the author, June 22, 2021.

⁴⁷ Louise LoBello (Franklin & Marshall College librarian/archivist), email message to the author, June 24, 2021. The player was Frederick M. Reed.

⁴⁸ “Elizabethtown Will Be Here on Saturday,” *Lebanon Daily News*, October 11, 1928, 10.

surprising a few local sports fans along the way. “This executive nucleus together with twenty-five inexperienced but willing red-blooded enthusiasts applied themselves to the task that was before them,” reported *Our College Times*, the Elizabethtown College student newspaper. “Hours of hard practice with the ‘pig skin’ on alluring fall evenings and uncountable cold suppers together with the ‘razz’ [from] distinctive critics were some of the minor things that had to be [contended] with.”⁴⁹

The 1928 Season and Media Coverage of the “Brutal Thirteen”

If the Elizabethtown Extension football team had any plans of playing “under the radar,” it was not to be. Their five-game season was reported in Lancaster, Lebanon, and Harrisburg newspapers, as well as in the Elizabethtown College campus paper, *Our College Times*. The reports detailed the games, opponents, and outcomes with all the language and color due intercollegiate football matches of the time. Such reporting, however, was sure to confirm the suspicions of Brethren church leaders and college trustees, who saw the sport as contravening their commitment to nonconformity to the world.

At the end of September 1928, the new Elizabethtown Extension School football team played their first match of the season. The inaugural game was against West Chester State Teachers College (today, West Chester University) at Wayne Field on the West Chester campus. West Chester was seen as a rising power in the local college ranks and the game would be a good first test for the Elizabethtown program. The Rams were coached by a former World War I naval officer named James F. McGovern, who had played his college ball at Muhlenberg College and would later go on to coach at Kutztown State Teachers College. “Coach ‘Jimmy’ McGovern has cut his football squad...to an even fifty after the first week’s practice,” wrote the *Intelligencer Journal* as it anticipated the opening game. “The prospects look bright for the best football team to represent the teachers for many seasons.”⁵⁰ The game was played in less-than-ideal conditions. “The game was played on a water-soaked field in a constant downpour of rain,” reported *Our College Times*. But despite the weather, “a capacity crowd of gridiron fans [was on hand].”⁵¹ The first quarter of the game went well for Elizabethtown with their defense holding the West Chester offense scoreless, something that must have surprised the Rams, as they had substitutes to spare while some of the Elizabethtown players labored as workhorse “two-way players,” playing both offense and defense. West Chester would only get into the end zone once, in the third quarter, with their other points coming due to mistakes on the part of Elizabethtown players in the form of two blocked punts that led to scores in the game’s second and four quarters. While the match ended in an 18–0 defeat, the Elizabethtown team could take pride in the fact that their scrappy band had held a seasoned college program in check for most of the game. “[The Elizabethtown squad] came

⁴⁹ “Open Forum: Football in the Past,” *Our College Times*, April 25, 1929, 2.

⁵⁰ “West Chester Ready for E-Town College,” *Intelligencer Journal*, September 28, 1928, 25.

⁵¹ “Elizabethtown College Holds West Chester 18–0,” *Our College Times*, October 17, 1928, 3.

back; displaying more teamwork and more fighting spirit [than their opponent]...[that] humbled the Teachers in the ‘refreshing’ pools of mud and water,” reported *Our College Times*.⁵²

There was little room for moral victories, however, as Angstadt and his teammates prepared for their next match (and their only close-to-home game) the following week against Beckley College of Harrisburg on October 6, 1928. This time, Elizabethtown would be facing a much more determined opponent in coach George A. Snell’s squad. Snell was a seasoned football mind, having played fullback at Pennsylvania State College (now University) under future Hall of Fame coach Hugo Bezdek, and had served as one of the team’s captains.⁵³ The week before Beckley planned to travel to Elizabethtown, Snell’s crew had been humiliated in a 6–0 loss to Allentown Preparatory College.⁵⁴ “The Beckley team received a lecture by Coach Snell to start yesterday’s workout and mistakes were talked over which had happened in the Allentown [Prep] game,” wrote the *Harrisburg Evening News*. “The offensive line work, which looked so poor last week, was stressed very strongly by Snell and the whole of yesterday’s practice to line scrimmages.”⁵⁵ Injuries had also cut into Snell’s starting line and there was no guarantee that his injured starters would return in time for the morning kickoff at the Klein Athletic Field at Elizabethtown High School.⁵⁶ Meanwhile, Angstadt was also preparing his players for the Beckley match by installing some new plays that had not been present at the West Chester game. “With the institution of numerous new fake and clever plays, Elizabethtown College is planning to give Beckley College the big surprise of the season,” wrote the *Intelligencer Journal*. “Coach A. Warren ‘Red’ Angstadt is running his local college grinders through daily stiff sessions of practice and several scrimmages.”⁵⁷ One of these practice scrimmages included a mock game against the Elizabethtown High School team, allowing the college team to work on new plays against live opponents. “Averaging about 170 pounds per man, the Elizabethtown College [sic] will have literally a stone wall line and one of the fastest backfields in their class throughout the state,” continued the *Intelligencer*. “The splendid condition of the local [field], coupled with the fact that nearly half a dozen Beckley men are on the idle shelf, will give Elizabethtown College an unnecessary advantage that will be extremely difficult to overcome.”⁵⁸

The Saturday morning game between the Extension team and Beckley was part of a doubleheader for local Elizabethtown football fans as Harrisburg’s William Penn High School and the Lancaster City High School football teams would take the field for a match after the college players had finished.⁵⁹ While the Beckley squad had weight, experience, and numbers on their side, the game evolved much like the one against West Chester the previous week. “The local college played a clever brand of football and at times completely surprised and outplayed their

⁵² “Elizabethtown College Holds West Chester 18–0,” *Our College Times*, October 17, 1928, 3.

⁵³ “Some Football Leaders of 1921,” 15.

⁵⁴ “Beckley Bows to Allentown,” *Harrisburg Telegraph*, October 1, 1928, 18.

⁵⁵ “Beckley Works for Next Game,” *Harrisburg Evening News*, October 2, 1928, 14.

⁵⁶ “Beckley Plays Morning Game,” *Harrisburg Telegraph*, October 4, 1928, 24.

⁵⁷ “E-Town Gridders to Meet Beckley,” *Intelligencer Journal*, October 5, 1928, 22.

⁵⁸ “E-Town Gridders to Meet Beckley,” 22.

⁵⁹ “College to Meet Beckley,” *Intelligencer Journal*, October 3, 1928, 18–19.

heavier opponents,” wrote the *Lancaster Sunday News*.⁶⁰ The Elizabethtown team kept Snell and his boys in check for the entire first half, with the Beckley air and ground attacks unable to get going. The frustration must have been palpable for Snell’s players as well as their fiery head coach, as some of them ended up getting pulled from the game entirely. “The Capital City grinders played a professional brand of football with the aim of getting men instead of touchdowns. This resulted in [players] of the Beckley machine being sent to the bench for slugging in the third quarter,” wrote *Our College Times*.⁶¹ The only score of the game came in the third quarter with a Beckley touchdown. (Three other Beckley touchdowns were called back due to officiating.)⁶² Once again, the Elizabethtown squad had stood its ground and presented a good front for their visiting foes even though the game ended in defeat.

On October 10, 1928, a mere four days after the loss to Beckley, the Elizabethtown squad traveled to a much-anticipated game at Millersville State Teachers College to face a strong team under the direction of coach John A. Pucillo, a New Jersey native who would be a major influence on sports and physical education on the Millersville campus for decades to come. Entering the game frustrated after a 6–6 tie with rival Lock Haven State Teachers College and with an opponent already on short rest, the Millersville squad made mincemeat of the Elizabethtown team, ending the game with a score of 18–0.⁶³ It seemed that everything went wrong for Angstadt and his teammates, as all of Millersville’s scoring came on turnovers. “The three touchdowns scored by the winners came after the [Millersville] eleven showed their alertness,” reported *Our College Times*. “Two touchdowns were registered after alien passes were intercepted and the other was scored on a fumble.”⁶⁴

The journey home to Elizabethtown must have been a sobering one as all possibility of a winning season was now gone. However, there was reason for hope as their next opponent would not be a team from the college ranks, but rather a local high school in need of a schedule filler. On October 13, 1928, Elizabethtown traveled to Lebanon High School. “Elizabethtown College will send a team to this city which will greatly outweigh the local school boys,” wrote the *Lebanon Daily News*. “The visitors will be larger, older, and most of them more experienced. . . . If the locals win or lose, it will be no disgrace for this week they are stepping out of their class to take on a college roster.”⁶⁵ However, nagging injuries were starting to handicap the already limited resources of the Elizabethtown team. Angstadt was forced to get creative with his lineup card by moving players around to prevent more injuries, including sliding one of his most reliable linemen, Benjamin Hoffman, to fullback as well as assigning him placekicking duties. It turned out that this would be helpful as Hoffman had a good game and succeeding in kicking the team’s only extra point of the match. Angstadt also recorded the team’s first ever touchdown in the second quarter.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ “E-Town College Loses to Beckley,” *Lancaster Sunday News*, October 7, 1928, 13.

⁶¹ “Elizabethtown College Loses to Beckley 7–0,” *Our College Times*, October 17, 1928.

⁶² “Beckley Romps to 7–0 Victory,” *Harrisburg Sunday Courier*, October 7, 1928, 3.

⁶³ “Millersville Teachers College Annexes Second Victory,” *Intelligencer Journal*, October 11, 1928, 18.

⁶⁴ “Blue and Gray Gridders Bow to Millersville,” *Our College Times*, October 17, 1928, 3.

⁶⁵ “Elizabethtown Will Be Here Saturday,” *Lebanon Daily News*, October 11, 1928, 10.

⁶⁶ “Lebanon Wins from County College, 12–7,” *Lancaster Sunday News*, October 14, 1928, 12.

Penalties and rough play would doom the team, however, as they went down again in defeat 12–7. The most frustrating point of the game came when Elizabethtown was on the one-yard line and three successive rushes failed to punch the ball into the end zone.⁶⁷

Following the loss at Lebanon, the men of the Elizabethtown Extension School Team were mercifully given a week of rest prior to their season finale. This time they would be making their way to the campus of Kutztown State Teachers College to take on a Golden Bears team led by coach John Bowman. According to the media reports, the contest was a tight game with the Kutztown offense being limited to two scores and a furious Elizabethtown comeback in the fourth quarter, which resulted in a touchdown by Hoffman, who was again playing fullback, but the extra point was missed. The game ended in a 14–6 loss for Elizabethtown, thus ending the Extension School’s season with a 0–5 record. However, optimism remained high that the team would be able to survive beyond this first losing effort. “Considering all the handicaps these pioneers had to overcome, their efforts were not in vain,” wrote *Our College Times*, “Although not a victory was chalked on the slate, the season was a success. These boys [played] the game till the end and fought a good clean fight. A spark of enthusiasm was kindled among the public which, if left to burst into flame, would have aided in increasing the student body [and its interest in the team] two-fold.”⁶⁸

A Reaffirmation and Realignment of Brethren Nonconformity

Even before the season ended, the Elizabethtown College Extension Team was planning a new slate of matches for 1929—and then they learned that a second season was not to be. In April 1929, an open letter from the team was published in *Our College Times* announcing that there would be no football in the fall. “It was with great enthusiasm that an energetic group of fellows, representing the Elizabethtown College, met on the athletic field of their college and pledged themselves to give their cooperation and full support in organizing an intercollegiate football team,” began the letter. “Although it was impossible to secure the moral and financial backing of the College officials this group of determined lads were not discouraged but took on increased determination to put this project across.... We regret to state that all football schedules which were arranged for [this] year have been cancelled.... It thus seems that this was the beginning and the end of football at Elizabethtown College.”⁶⁹

Besides thanking the team’s fans and supporters, both in the student body and among some faculty, the letter lay blame for the team’s disbandment at the feet of the college board of trustees: “This spark was smothered by those worthy trustees who came to the conclusion that football is a brutal game and would thus attract a class of undesirable students to Elizabethtown College. Each man is free to his own opinion in this matter,” concluded the letter. As a parting gift to the players, the money remaining from the team’s fundraising would be used to purchase “thirteen blue sweaters for the thirteen men who played the greatest number of quarters, including the manager.” “Thus, you will be able to identify any member of the ‘brutal thirteen’ and make your departure

⁶⁷ “Lebanon Wins from County College, 12–7,” *Lancaster Sunday News*, October 14, 1928, 12.

⁶⁸ “Open Forum: Football in the Past,” *Our College Times*, April 25, 1929, 2.

⁶⁹ “Open Forum: Football in the Past,” 2.

before anything brutal happens,” quipped the letter, bringing this chapter in Elizabethtown sports history to a close.⁷⁰ Students across the campus mourned the loss of their gridiron heroes with one student writing in a campus editorial, “A college without football is like a waffle without holes, the taste may be the same and they may be as good, but they are not all that people expect them to be, and are not as attractive as the others.”⁷¹

Brethren opposition to the “brutal and unchristian” sport of football, as the trustees had described the game in 1927, meant that football would not see another season. The Church of the Brethren in eastern and southern Pennsylvania drew a firm boundary of nonconformity around football that was nonnegotiable. At the same time, the possibility of intercollegiate sports other than football “became acute following the illegitimately scheduled football games” of 1928, as remembered by then-college president Ralph W. Schlosser. In January 1929, the board of trustees met with seven faculty members who held diverse views on the topic. Some believed many students would leave if there were no opportunity for sports, some “advocated a limited number of controlled” intercollegiate sports, and some focused their objection on football. In the end, the trustees agreed that, “exclusive of football,” a limited number of intercollegiate sports be permitted under the direction of a six-member college athletic council.⁷² Men’s basketball was the first to be approved, beginning in December 1928, followed by baseball in 1929. The 1929 minutes of the Eastern District of the Church of the Brethren acknowledged that there had been a shift in policy regarding athletics, but Brethren nonconformity had not been totally abandoned. Going forward, “a restricted number of intercollegiate games has been permitted by our board,” although “intramural games in which all students are encouraged to participate” would be the preferred mode of physical exercise.⁷³

In the final analysis, it is easy to dismiss the lone season of the Elizabethtown Extension School Football Team as a footnote in the annals of local sports history. They won no championships and provided no players to be named in the Elizabethtown College Athletic Hall of Fame. “We...had a perfect season,” joked Angstadt in 1983. “We didn’t win one game.”⁷⁴ However, as the famed coach Vince Lombardi once said, wins and losses are not as important as the will one has to prepare to win. Team manager A. Warren “Red” Angstadt would finish his years at Elizabethtown College as a successful basketball and tennis player, entering the Elizabethtown College Athletic Hall of Fame for these sports in 1975. He would go on to a decade-long career as a football coach and headmaster at the nearby Patton Industrial School before joining the U.S. Navy and rising to the rank of captain. In 1993, he was given an award by the Elizabethtown Alumni Association for his contributions to the college. He died in 1999 in Florida, where he lived in retirement.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ “Open Forum: Football in the Past,” *Our College Times*, April 25, 1929, 2.

⁷¹ “Editorial: Our Policies,” *Our College Times*, September 23, 1929, 2.

⁷² Schlosser, *History of Elizabethtown College*, 148–149. Daniel E. Myers was one of two faculty members appointed to the Athletic Council.

⁷³ *Minutes of the Sixty-Third Regular District Meeting [...]*, 13.

⁷⁴ “Pigskin Memories,” *Intelligencer Journal*, October 26, 1983, Northwest Extra, 1, 5.

⁷⁵ “Obituary of Captain Albert Warren Angstadt,” *Pensacola News Journal*, March 16, 1999, 22.

William Miller Barbour, the team’s African American halfback, went on to graduate study at Haverford College and the University of Pennsylvania following his graduation from Elizabethtown in 1932. He later became the western regional director for the National Urban League, fighting housing discrimination in California and helping to found the first desegregated housing development in Victorville, California, before dying suddenly of a heart issue in 1957.⁷⁶ Paul Fisher, another of the Extension team’s star runners, worked for Bethlehem Steel in Steelton for over four decades before retiring in 1971. He spent his whole life in Elizabethtown and passed away in 1986.⁷⁷ Benjamin Hoffman, the lineman turned fullback and placekicker (who scored one of the team’s two touchdowns), went on to play college ball at Juniata, where he captained the team, and returned to Elizabethtown to become a bit of a local icon by turning his family farm in Conoy Township into a popular Christmas tree business that operated for almost five decades.⁷⁸

In January 1929, an Elizabethtown College student named Robert Houser, known on campus for his school spirit, penned a letter that appeared in the college newspaper, speaking about the connections between football and life. “In football, there is no place on the team for a man without courage,” the letter said, and then continued:

The fellow without grit is relegated to the scrubs and eventually to the sideline. He may have all kinds of natural ability, he may be big and powerfully built, but if he doesn’t hit the line hard, he can’t make the team. The small man with a big heart is always a better player than the big man who flinches in the face of opposition.⁷⁹

It is unknown if Houser had been one of the Extension School team’s supporters, but his analogy rang true. The Elizabethtown College football team may have lacked victories, but they never lacked heart, and the obstacles they faced in making their gridiron dreams a reality speaks to the determination and character of these young men.

In many ways, the team did express a kind of accommodation to the modern world that their traditional elders had tried to hold at bay. And yet their desire to test their merit beyond the bounds of the campus and their willingness to accept wholeheartedly those who came from different walks of life also made their story an example of the college’s motto, Educate for Service. While the desire to continue intercollegiate football beyond that first season was dashed, the wider American acceptance (some would say obsession) with college football would continue into the twenty-first century. Today, the NCAA estimates that an average of 25 million Americans watch the national college football championship alone, based on an informal study of television ratings.⁸⁰ The seeds

⁷⁶ W. Miller Barbour, obituary, *New York Times*, March 21, 1957, 31; “UL Official Dies in LA,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, May 30, 1957, 4.

⁷⁷ Paul E. Fisher, obituary, *Intelligencer Journal*, June 24, 1986, 4.

⁷⁸ B. G. Hoffman, obituary, *Lancaster New Era*, January 15, 2002, 15.

⁷⁹ Robert Houser, “Football and Life,” *Our College Times*, January 8, 1929, 4.

⁸⁰ Sports Media Watch. “NCAA College Football National Championship TV Viewers in the United States from 1993 to 2024 (in Millions).” January 31, 2024. Statista.

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/244245/average-conference-tv-viewership-ncaa-football/>.

of that popularity were sown by the 1920s sporting boom that helped bring to life the Elizabethtown College Extension Team.

A thread of nonconformity also runs through this story. Brethren elders and members of the college board of trustees were motivated by their desire to keep forces of wider American culture at arm's length, and there was also a kind of nonconformity on the part of the young men who donned the pads and attempted to play football. The team was unlike others in the region because it fielded an interracial squad that also included a player with a physical handicap, a lineup that made it visibly different, nonmainstream, and history-making. This was not a team of rowdy "college jocks," as one might expect, but apparently a group of young men who represented all the lessons of goodwill that a Brethren institution could ask for, and they used this experience to fuel their future study and endeavors for their communities and neighbors. Their lone season may have concluded the experiment of college football on the Elizabethtown campus, but their example is one that helped open a new era of athletic expression on the campus of a Brethren institution that had once banned intercollegiate sports from its student body.⁸¹

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⁸¹ Subsequent athletic history at the college is chronicled in "Blue Jay Athletics History," accessed July 7, 2024, <https://www.etown.edu/about/history/athletics-history.aspx>. The Blue Jay became the school's athletic mascot in the 1930s.

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