
Harold Edward “Red” Grange is generally considered one of the twenty-five best American football players of the twentieth century and is often credited with popularizing professional football during the roaring twenties. Red played football at the University of Illinois from 1923 to 1926, so it is only fitting that the University of Illinois Press series on “Sport and Society” should issue this biography of the “Galloping Ghost” and his place in American cultural history.

Red Grange was born in the rural hamlet of Forksville, Pennsylvania, on June 13, 1903. He was the third child of Sadie and Lyle Grange. He became involved in sports in high school, and his father took an active interest in his accomplishments. Grange excelled in football, basketball, and track and was good enough to attract the attention of both the University of Michigan and the University of Illinois. At his father’s insistence, he attended Illinois in the fall of 1922. In 1923 he led the team to an undefeated season and earned All-American honors from Walter Camp and others. His spectacular performances coincided with football’s evolution as one of the centerpieces of mass culture made possible by low-priced, closed automobiles, improved roads, urban prosperity, and an increasingly influential mass media.

Amid much controversy, Grange allied himself with Charlie “Cash and Carry” Pyle and signed a professional football contract before graduating from college. He proceeded to undertake barnstorming tours, advertised products, and ballyhooed a variety of athletic events. College coaches like Robert Zuppke, Amos Alonzo Stagg, Fielding Yost, and their allies on campuses and in the press decried the corrupt world of professional football and commercialism, while personally profiting from it. They vilified Grange for supporting pro football, which they considered “a dirty little business run by rogues and bargain basement entrepreneurs” (p. 102).

This book is more than the story of the life of the “Galloping Ghost.” John M. Carroll does a good job of placing Grange in an appropriate context. He makes good use of anecdotes to reveal aspects of character. He explores the influence of World War I on the rising popularity of football and examines the politically conservative environment of suburban Chicago and downstate Illinois that shaped Grange’s conservative political philosophy. His book describes the subtleties and the hypocrisy associated with recruiting college football players during the first two decades of the twentieth century. He touches on the role of football revenue in college sports and the symbolism that is critical to the development of a sports culture. All in all, this book is a significant contribution to football history.

If the book has any weaknesses, they are tangential to the themes of the study. Perhaps Carroll understates the popularity of and public interest in Grange’s predecessor, Jim Thorpe, as the star...
attraction for pro football during the period 1915–1921. He does not consider as many questions regarding the management decisions made by George Halas and other franchise owners in the formative years of the National Football League as might be warranted. And our understanding of the role of the media in creating sports celebrities would benefit from more analysis. Yet, none of these concerns diminish the value of this well-crafted, interesting biography.

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Cincinnati’s Over-the-Rhine neighborhood lies just north of the central business district. Its name refers to the canal (popularly termed the “Rhine”) that formed the southern and western margins of the one-time suburb of downtown. German immigrants constituted the majority of its population in the 1850s, although a variety of other people also settled there. In their case study of the neighborhood, Zane L. Miller and Bruce Tucker recount a story that is grimly emblematic of the history of near-downtown areas in other American cities. The multiple failures of planning and an urban politics deformed by racism insured the area’s steady social, economic, and infrastructural deterioration.

Long term neglect turned Over-the-Rhine into a target for often conflicting schemes of urban renewal. The authors, accordingly, conduct the reader through a thicket of Cincinnati politics, personalities, associations, redevelopment programs, and assorted attempts to transform the social and physical environment. Often misguided, various revitalization plans sought to reclaim the neighborhood from the common fate of similar core urban zones across the country. Amid the intricate detail about the neighborhood and its would-be rescuers, the study at times risks losing the reader’s attention. Still, the story is worth the reading, particularly when it demonstrates how shifting views of urban planning played out in Cincinnati.

Miller and Tucker argue that two dominant modes of thought, each leaving its imprint on Over-the-Rhine’s history, have defined urban planning in the twentieth century. Before 1950, the emphasis lay on slum clearance, rezoning for commercial use, and building public housing. In this scheme, the wishes of residents were ignored in favor of imposed social engineering. Here, the city was regarded as an organic unit, subject to dominant social forces. Planners, consequently, subjected the city and its residents—the poor and the pow-