

Challenge From Canton: 1905

By PFRA Research

Enough was enough!

After two years of watching the Massillon Tigers strut proudly to the Ohio Independent Football Championship -- the World Professional Title to all intents and purposes -- Canton could take no more. 1905, they vowed, would be different.

The 1903 Massillon victory over the local heroes didn't really count anyway, according to diehard Canton fans. The Canton team had taken Massillon's Tigers too lightly and been ambushed. 1904 shouldn't be counted either. Massillon had gone out and hired all those Pittsburgh pros while Canton fielded no major team at all.

A bunch called the "Shamrocks" claimed the Canton city championship on a late November win over the "Imperials." Although one Shamrock -- Norman "Dutch" Speck -- was to be a fixture on Canton gridirons for years and even play on the Bulldog NFL title-winners of the 1920s, both squads were made up mostly of local pass-the-hat-and-divvy-up semi-pros. They were several cuts below such imported Massillon luminaries as Bob Shiring, the 250-pound center, Herman Kerchoffe, a 6-5 guard compared favorably with the immortal Heffelfinger, and Doc McChesney, the big-play tackle-end. Even Dan "Bullet" Riley, possibly the best native Canton player of the time, performed not for his hometown but for the hated Tigers, and no doubt he was being paid very well for his treason. Through much of the '04 season the Canton press contented itself with snide remarks about the professionals to the west, but football leaders knew better than to issue a challenge to the Tigers.

But they would not wait forever.

On November 15, 1904, plans were announced to organize a new athletic association in Canton to run both the baseball and football teams. So there would be no misunderstanding, the statement stipulated that the football team was to be a "professional organization," complete with a "professional coach."

The gauntlet was down.

A popular pastime in Massillon during the 1904 season was speculating on how the wonderful Tigers might fare against one of the famous college elevens of the east. The charisma of Yale, Harvard, Princeton, Penn and a few other institutions of higher football was such that these ponderings was sneered at as grandiose braggadocio by anyone from outside the Massillon city limits. In point of fact, the comparison was not so silly.

The Tigers were, after all, older than most college players; generally they were bigger, and a few were even faster. There may not have been a more devastating lineman in the nation than Kerchoffe. Shiring, McChesney, Riley, Ted Nesser and others

might have earned varsity letters for several strong eastern schools had they matriculated toward the dawn. In terms of sheer physical ability, the 1904 Tigers could have given a good account of themselves on a man-to-man basis against the vaunted easterners. However, football is not a man-to-man game. Victory depends on team play, not individual heroics. Because of that, had the '04 Tigers faced the national collegiate champion University of Pennsylvania team, the nod would have gone to the collegians.

Two factors weighed heavily in favor of college teams.

The first was coaching. Tiger leader Ed J. Stewart was still relatively inexperienced and, for all his ambition and drive, would have found himself overmatched in pitting his football "smarts" against the veteran mentors of the east. Additionally, a pro coach -- no matter how clever -- had little power to compel his men to follow his directions. If a pro player didn't like his orders he could jump to another team. A collegian's only option in a disagreement with his coach was to give up football or leave school.

An even more important factor favoring the college teams was that they practiced daily. As a consequence, they were able to develop timing, rehearse ball-handling, practice a wide range of plays, and play as a single unit. Pros seldom saw more than one or two practices per week and there were always absentees at those. Some of the best players only showed up for games. The results were eleven men playing as individuals, simplified offenses, and plenty of fumbles.

But after all that has been said, and even giving a few points for "college spirit," ANY football team in the world would have had its hands full against the teams that appeared in Massillon's orange and black and Canton's red and white during 1905 and 1906. In those two years, the best post-graduate players in the nation played for one side or the other. So much talent was gathered in northeast Ohio during those two seasons that had it been sliced onions, they'd have been crying all the way to Delaware.

Modern players may be bigger, faster, and better trained, but in "state of the art" football in '05 and '06, nobody did it better than the Tigers and Bulldogs.

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Of course, in 1905, the Canton team was not yet known as the Bulldogs. That didn't happen until the next year. But the Canton A.C., as they were called at first, set about building a football team with a toughness and tenacity that would have done real Bulldogs proud.

Today, when a new National Football League team is created, the tyro gets to sort through and pick from the leavings of all the other

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NFL teams. Then, constructed of spit and geritol, the shiney new team goes forth and gets its brains beat out.

In 1905, the best way to create a new team -- one that could threaten to topple Massillon -- was to go out and offer money to the best players on all the other teams. That was the course Canton followed, and, considering the results, there's a great deal to be said for the old way of doing things.

Aside from Massillon, the nearest good team was the Akron A.C., the club that had played the Tigers for the state title the year before. From that squad, Canton picked seven men who'd played in the championship game, including Ed Murphy, who had scored a last-minute touchdown, "Doc" Rayl, an outstanding guard, and tackle Bill Laub, the Akron captain-coach. Laub was given the same job at Canton. Shorn of their key players, the Akron A.C. decided to skip making a serious assault on the state football title in 1905 and scheduled accordingly.

It is likely Canton made a bid for Shelby's great black star, Charles Follis, but the speedy halfback preferred to stay with his old club. They did lure Bert Sutter, a small but effective veteran end.

Three important acquisitions were slick quarterback Harry James of Michigan U., John A. "Buck" Hall of Yale and Michigan, and Dave Cure of several schools but most recently with the famous pro team of Latrobe, Pa. James had field-generated a couple of Fielding Yost's revered "Point-a-Minute" teams. Hall had All-America credentials, but the fact he'd actually played at Yale would have made him an honored member of the Canton team anyway. Cure, with much less fanfare, would show himself to be one of the best players in the land.

For subs, the team had the pick of Canton's semi-pros. Several other famous players joined up during the season, but from the start the squad looked stronger on paper than the Massillon team that had won everything the year before.

But Massillon wasn't standing still. Far from it, Manager J.J. Wise and Coach Stewart were determined on a third straight title. They had a strong nucleus in McChesney, Riley, Kerchoffe, Ted Nesser, Shiring, End Clark Schrontz, and Tackle Jack Lang. Money was no object as they signed end W.H. "Doc" Merriam of Connie Mack's famous 1902 Philadelphia team and four stars of the 1903 Franklin All-Stars, the team that had beaten the best pro squads in the country in a Madison Square Garden "World Series of Football" in New York only two years earlier. P.J. McNulty and J.M. "Tige" McFarland were a pair of bruising linemen; Jack Hayden was a clever and gritty quarterback. Best known of the quartet was 28-year old J.T. "Tex" Mathews, a versatile halfback who'd been receiving paychecks for his football efforts for nearly a decade.

Two other members of the squad deserve mention. "Uncle Charley" Moran was a tough little fullback who went on to greater fame as a college coach at Texas A & M and Centre. While leading the latter, he discovered all-timer "Bo" McMillin. Another new man was Ted Nesser's older brother John, a fine athlete who could fill in anywhere.

With all that talent on hand, the native Massillonians who'd held down the fort for two years figured to get precious little playing

time. End Baldy Wittmann would lose more hair over his cigar store (the slogan was "our prices and the Massillon Tigers can't be beat") than over the team. He was still the captain, but Clark Schrontz became "field captain," a more practical position. Even Coach Stewart, who doubled as quarterback, benched himself in favor of Hayden.

From the start it was obvious that the championship would turn on the scheduled Thanksgiving Day meeting between the two colossi of Stark County. Unfortunately, that meeting was delayed by a petty annoyance -- both teams had first to play their other scheduled games.

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The Canton and Massillon newspapers treated the games leading up to the Big One as a kind of contest between the two teams. The first question was how many points were scored against a foe; the second question was how little did the opponent gain. No one asked who won; victory was assumed. Only the margin had relevance -- to be compared with how easily the other Stark County giant won.

Canton got rolling first with a workmanlike, 41-0, victory over the Lisbon A.C. on the last day of September. They played straight football with no frills because several players had just arrived in town and were not familiar with the signals. The Canton *Repository* crowed that only once did Lisbon get as far as Canton's 45-yard line.

The following Saturday both teams were in action.

Massillon's home field was on the grounds of the Ohio State Mental Asylum. Two thousand semi-sane fans turned out at the Hospital Grounds to watch the Tigers' opener. Bullet Riley and Charley Moran were big guns in an easy, 34-0, win over the Ohio Medical University team, but they had more than enough help. The Medics were able to register only a single first down, while only once were they able to stop the Tigers.

The Columbus A.C. collected the same number of first downs in their game at Canton's Mahaffey Park, but the visitors' defense was even more porous. Canton scored within three and a half minutes of the opening kickoff and simply continued to rack up points in a game mercifully shortened to 36 and a half minutes. Dave Cure had three touchdowns, one field goal, and nine extra points. The final score stood at 63-0 and might have been worse had not Columbus possessed another one of the Nesser brothers at tackle. This one was Phil.

A week later, while Massillon was easing by Norwalk, 42-0, Canton slaughtered some nice young sailors from the U.S.S. Michigan in what may have been the most horrendous naval defeat since the Spanish Armada. Although the first half was shortened to 25 minutes, Canton ran off 63 points. Only fifteen minutes of the second half were played, but Captain Laub's men sensed a record and poured in 58 more points to make the final count 121-0. Quarterback James, who scored a pair of touchdowns himself, had gone from a "point-a-minute" team to a "three-points-a-minute" team. Dave Cure got his usual three touchdowns and field goal, but this time he added SEVENTEEN extra points.

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Thus far, Canton was easily winning the Battle of the Margins. With that and a nickle, you could buy a five-cent cigar at Baldy Wittmann's cigar store.

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Perhaps the most popular football team in the country in 1905 -- "America's Team," if you like -- belonged to the Indian school at Carlisle, Pa. Jim Thorpe wouldn't play on the team for several more seasons, but the Redskins already had a national following. The school itself was more on the high school level, but the football team was big time, scheduling the best college teams. The year before they'd whipped Bucknell, Virginia, and Ohio State, and suffered respectable losses to Harvard and Penn. They were good, and equally important -- with their feathers and war dances -- they were a draw.

They were also just what the Canton A.C. needed to pay some salaries. The crowds at Mahaffey Park had not been what was hoped for. After all, the fans could watch Dave Cure or Ed Murphy run for easy touchdowns only so many times before it all became repetitious and boring.

Canton jumped at the chance to sign up for a game with Carlisle.

They also tried an end run on Massillon. Canton Manager George Williams knew that as soon as he announced a game with Carlisle, Massillon would be after the Indians to play the Tigers first. To circumvent that, he convinced the Carlisle folks to agree to play no other games in Stark County during 1905. Once that was accomplished and Carlisle was on the dotted line, he happily crowed his coup to the press: Canton would meet Carlisle on November 22, eight days before the big Massillon game.

Over in the Tigers' camp could be heard the gnashing of teeth.

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In the meantime, the Cantons continued to win football games with basketball scores, at least on their side of the scoreboard. On Saturday, October 21, they topped the century mark for the second week in a row with a 107-0 bludgeoning of the Dayton A.C. They got off to a nice start with 86 points in the first half but took so long in doing it that darkness fell after only ten minutes of the second half. Dave Cure chipped in thirteen extra points, giving him 30 in two games.

Significantly, only 900 came out to Mahaffey Park to watch.

While Canton was having its track meet, Massillon played its first important game of the season as the Shelby A.C. came to town. In some circles -- mostly in Shelby -- the A.C. was regarded as an equal part of an Ohio Big Three. Looking at it that way, they were grossly overrated. There was only a Big Two -- Canton and Massillon. These were the mountains; everyone else was far below, looking up. Shelby, however, was at least a respectable foothill. And they lost by a respectable score -- 22-0.

Actually, it was a close game for the first half. Follis was injured and unable to play, considerably reducing Shelby's attack, but the

visitors had one real star in their lineup. Homer Davidson may have been the best punter in America -- certainly he was the best the Tigers had ever seen. His long boots kept Shelby out of danger for most of the first period. The Tigers managed only one long drive, with Charley Moran finally smashing over. But the extra point was missed to make it only 5-0 at intermission.

In the second half, the Tigers stopped fooling around and put their considerable weight advantage to work. Using straight power football -- the longest run was a mere 30 yards by Riley -- the Tigers ground out three more touchdowns.

Those playing the Margin Game were left with trying to equate Massillon's solid victory over Shelby, the respectable foothill, with Canton's walkover of Dayton, the pits.

On the following Wednesday, Canton took its show on the road for a mid-week game against the Akron A.C., the team that had played Massillon for the title in '04, now only a pale shadow of what it was. All its best players were lined up against it.

The return of Bill Laub and the others brought out a good crowd that cheered about equally for its local team and its former heroes. The Canton *Repository* decided this meant the Akron fans were rooting for Canton to take the title away from Massillon. In truth, the only efforts that merited cheering were by the Cantons as they romped 52-0. Eddie Murphy celebrated his return to Akron by scoring three of the eight touchdowns.

On Saturday, October 28, Massillon had another meaningless workout, this one against Lorain by 51-0. Canton, on the other hand, went out to Shelby for a game the *Repository* reported thus:

Twelve hundred people saw the herculean team of Canton decisively administer a sound trouncing to Shelby on the local gridiron Saturday afternoon. Shelby, exhausted asked that the game be called. The important bearing the match had in regard to getting a line on state professional champions for the year made the game and Canton's triumph significant. Shelby was humiliated by the plunging, smashing offense and the stubborn defense of the forwards and backfield of Coach Laub's giants, who showed such form that Shelby players who have contested with Massillon concede supremacy to Canton.

The Canton players surpassed Massillon's score of a week ago by three points when they ran up 25 points in thirty-nine minutes and a half of play. Massillon's score was 22, made in forty minutes of play.

Three more points in thirty seconds less time! To anyone except a Canton fanatic, the Battle of Margins was a dead heat as October ended. Canton was undefeated in six games and Massillon likewise in four. Neither had been tested.

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An interesting sidelight to the Canton-Shelby game was that Ted Nesser played a Shelby tackle for the contest. Apparently, Massillon felt it didn't need him to wipe up Lorain, so big Ted -- who

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was at that time Ohio's foremost practitioner of the "hired gun" approach to football -- went elsewhere for his pay. It turned out to be a long afternoon for him.

Canton had a new tackle to replace Bedur, one of the former Akron A.C. men. Jack Ernst was rangier and heavier than Ted Nesser. He was also a former captain at Lafayette, and that put him ahead of Ted in experience. He was literally worth his weight -- a hefty 220 -- in gold to Canton. Until he showed up, the smart money gave the edge to Massillon's huge line.

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The November side of the season began with a pair of routine massacres. Canton loped through the Benwood (W.Va.) A.C. to the tune of 66-0. Massillon hardly worked up a sweat in topping the Broadway A.C. of Cleveland, 88-0.

The Tigers scheduled a Thursday game for November 9, and the whole Canton team went over to watch. They saw the Toledo A.A. use a great deal of speed to hold Massillon to only a pair of first-half touchdowns. In the second half, the Tigers caught up with the visitors and trampled them underfoot for a 40-0 final.

After the game, Herman Kerchoffe and Buck Hall, who figured to oppose each other in the Big Game on Thanksgiving, fell into conversation along the sidelines. They were surprised to discover that they had already faced each other ten years before while Kerchoffe was at Purdue and Hall was at Michigan.

The Canton players had several good things to say about the Tigers, but they also suggested the team got by on brawn. A talented team with both size and speed figured to be their match.

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Massillon's next opponent was the Carlisle Indian school team.

Once more Massillon had outflanked Canton. As soon as Canton and the Indians signed the contract limiting Carlisle to only a single Stark County appearance, Massillon began considering how to get around it. Their solution was simple and brilliant -- play the Indians in Cleveland. Clevelanders were anxious to see the Indians and well aware of the Tigers' pair of state titles. A crowd described as "immense" showed up. Until just before game time when the Massillon fans pulled in, the Indians were the bettors' favorites.

Coach Kinney of the Indians expected the Tigers to use their weight advantage by attacking through the middle. To that point, he kept several of his faster men on the bench in favor of a couple of bigger braves. They were completely taken by surprise when Massillon consistently went for end runs.

More astonishing was the speed that Massillon unveiled. The Indians were reputed to be the fastest team in the country, but the Tigers turned out to be faster. It was as though some of the Tigers had been going at half speed all season and chose this opportunity to let it all out.

The best the Indians could do was a single field goal by Frank Mt. Pleasant. Massillon recorded a safety in the first half and a touchdown with goal in the second. Ironically, the touchdown was

scored by Tex Mathews, an Indian who had played for just about everyone, including at one time Carlisle.

The 8-4 victory gave the "Margin Players" a new comparison. Less than three weeks before the great Penn team had been able to edge Carlisle by only 6-0. It would be instructive to see how Canton would do against the Redskins.

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Before Canton could have its shot at the Indians, they went after the Pennsylvania pro champs. Although pro football was not what it had been in Pennsylvania a few years before, the Steelton Y.M.C.A. team near Harrisburg and the Latrobe team east of Pittsburgh were still strong outfits. Indeed, Latrobe hadn't lost a game since 1901. The only knock on either Pennsylvania club was that the only serious competition they ever faced was when they played each other.

Canton would have preferred to wait until Steelton and Latrobe had settled the whole Pennsylvania question with their home-and-home series, but because the second game was scheduled right before Canton's own meeting with Massillon, they challenged Latrobe in early November as soon as the western Pennsylvania crew topped Steelton at Harrisburg.

A game was arranged for Saturday, November 18, at Latrobe, about 40 miles east of Pittsburgh. A Canton pro team would not go any further east for fifteen more years.

When Canton arrived at the Pennsylvania city, they received a piece of good news: Andy "Bull" Smith, the former Penn fullback who'd been the major offensive force against Steelton, would not be in Latrobe's lineup. Smith would later gain fame as coach of the University of California's "Wonder Teams," but in 1905 he was a wonder as an All-America plunging fullback. His absence boosted Canton's stock.

However, the Latrobe coach and quarterback, John Brallier, was one of the greatest of early pro stars. For more than sixty years, he was thought to have been the first pro player, and though research eventually disproved that claim, it would be hard to name another player with such a long and distinguished record of success in the early pro football wars.

By game time, an estimated twelve hundred dollars had been wagered on the outcome. More than 3,000 people showed up at Latrobe's tiny Athletic Park.

The first half turned into a duel between Canton's potent offense and Latrobe's determined defense. Three times Canton worked its way to within Latrobe's 20-yard line, and three times Latrobe's defenders held them off. Prominent in the Latrobe line was Jack Lang, a fireplug tackle who often crossed into Ohio to play for Massillon.

The game was decided in the first twenty seconds of the second half. Seanor of Latrobe kicked off and the ball sailed over Dave Cure's head. The Canton star raced back to the ball, but as he picked it up he realized he was trapped near his goal line. Thinking quickly, he tried to punt the ball back to Latrobe. Unfortunately, the

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idea was better than the execution. His kick was low, and Captain Ryan of Latrobe batted it with his hands at the ten. A terrific scramble ensued, but Hayes of Latrobe gained control of the ball at the five and scrambled into the end zone. Brallier kicked the extra point.

After that, Latrobe's defense did the rest, repeatedly holding off Canton thrusts through the whole of the second half. Canton's unbeatable team had been whipped!

Meanwhile back in Buckeyeland, for lack of anything better to do, Massillon played a practice game against its own reserves.

Canton lost more than a football game at Latrobe. They also lost Captain Bill Laub permanently. The star tackle sustained a muscle tear in his leg that ended his playing career. Years later, as mayor of Akron, he still walked with a decided limp.

Laub's leadership and judgment, and the trust his teammates held in him were irreplaceable, but the most obvious immediate problem was the gaping hole left at tackle. The long heralded meeting with the Carlisle Indians was scheduled for only four days after the Latrobe game.

An urgent call brought a replacement of known quality. Charles E. "Blondy" Wallace, a Canton native, had captained Connie Mack's famous 1902 Philadelphia pro team and held down a similar position with the great Franklin All-Stars in '03. As an undergrad at Penn, he'd been a second-team Walter Camp All-America. When Manager Williams of Canton contacted him, he was coaching the linemen at his alma mater.

At 6-2 and 240-pounds, Blondy was a giant by the standards of the day, and more than Laub's equal on the field. However, to get him, Williams had to offer him Laub's captaincy; only time would tell if he could match his predecessor in leadership.

Wallace's debut against Carlisle was a success. Although Laub, nominally the coach, remained on the sideline to make decisions on substitutes, Blondy led the team on the field. His blocking was instrumental in Canton's first-half march to its only touchdown. About midway through the period, the Red and White moved steadily down the field, taking their yardage in small chunks. Fullback Max Ozersky, subbing for Cure, finally crashed over from one foot out. Bert Sutter added the goal to make the score 6-0. About seven minutes later, Buck Hall blocked a Carlisle punt. The ball rolled behind the Indians' goal line. Frank Mt. Pleasant, the Carlisle quarterback, picked it up, but Hall was on top of him before he could get out of the end zone.

Leading 8-0 at the half, Canton seemed in a good position to defeat the Indians by a far more decisive score than had Massillon. Instead, the second half turned into a fumble contest as both teams developed butterfingers. The miscues seldom caused the ball to change hands, but they so hindered the offenses that the game saw no more scores.

The following Saturday, Massillon tuned up for the Big Game with an easy win over the Canal Dover Giants. Nearly every player on the team got his share of playing time, holding the final score to a mere 39-0 when it had been expected to go much higher. The only new player in the Tigers' lineup was a former fullback and present coach at a relatively obscure mid-western school called Notre Dame. Louis "Red" Salmon did not particularly distinguish himself against Canal Dover, but, in retrospect, the opportunity to "break him in" may have been the most significant move the Tigers made all season.

Toward the end of the 1905 season, an event occurred in northeastern Ohio that cast pro football in a very bad light and undid much of the positive comment the Canton-Massillon rivalry was causing. It was the kind of thing that led many college football leaders to hate the pros until their dying day.

The most famous and popular amateur athlete in the state was the quarterback for Case University, George "Peggy" Parratt. Case was a major sports power by Ohio standards in the early years of this century, on a par with Ohio State. Parratt was its most glittering star. He was captain of the baseball team, the leading player on the basketball squad, and so outstanding on a football field that many fans felt he should be the first All-America to be named from an Ohio college.

Then, shortly before Case's big game with Western Reserve, rumors began circulating that Parratt was spending his Sunday afternoons playing professionally for the Shelby A.C. According to the story, a player who wore a headgear and large nose guard that completely masked his features was not really "Jimmy Murphy" as announced, but the Case quarterback whose face would have been familiar to any reader of an Ohio sports page.

Case chose to ignore the rumors and Western Reserve made no protest when Parratt took the field against them. The same rumors held that W.R.U. kept silent because some of its own players had been right there in the game with "Jimmy Murphy."

After the game -- a 34-0 Case win -- the reports of Parratt's professionalism intensified, perhaps spurred by some disgruntled Western Reserve fans. It became increasingly difficult for Case officials to ignore them.

A few days later, the story appeared in several Ohio newspapers that a reporter at a Shelby game "just happened" to follow Jimmy Murphy to the locker room when that young man was forced out of the game with an injury. Once there, the reporter was "surprised" to discover that the face beneath the headgear and nose guard belonged to Peggy Parratt.

Case officials had no choice but to call Parratt in to answer the charge. A regular scenario had developed when such incidents had taken place at other institutions. It went like this: the star athlete was asked about his involvement in professionalism; he denied it; the school announced their investigation had exonerated the star. It was all very pat.

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So Case officials asked Peggy Parratt if he'd been playing pro football.

"Sure," said Parratt. "And I intend to keep doing it."

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In the eight days between their victory over Carlisle and the Big Game on Thanksgiving, Canton's braintrust of Williams, Laub, and Wallace raced around trying to improve an already powerful lineup. Reportedly, they had the advice of Michigan Coach Fielding Yost in their choices.

Ends Bert Sutter and "Tacky" Volk had done well all year, but they were considered to be on the small side to face the Massillon behemoths. They were replaced by a larger pair of terminals, R.E. Farabaugh of Lehigh and Herb Graver of Michigan.

A new guard named Leigh Turner, once of Dartmouth, was added to the interior line.

Three new backs were hired to line up behind quarterback James. Marshall Reynolds had been rated among the best halfbacks around in his days at Penn. Andy "Bull" Smith, available again, was brought in from Latrobe to play fullback.

The third new back was in a class by himself -- Michigan's two-time All-America Willie Heston. Even today there are experts who place Heston in the All-Time College Backfield. He was big, fast, elusive, and tough. List everything needed in a great running back and those who saw him in action said Heston had it.

He didn't come cheap. One story had Canton and Massillon both bidding for him while Heston kept upping his demands. Finally, the story went, both teams grew tired of the game and sent him identical telegrams that they wouldn't have him at any price. Perhaps Canton's telegram was not delivered. According to all sources, Heston agreed to don red and white for \$600. It would be twenty years before a player would make more on a single appearance.

The Canton payroll was estimated at \$3,000 for the game. Reason had gone out the window in the push to beat Massillon. The best guess of how much was bet on the outcome was "thousands and thousands."

When asked how his Tigers would fare against a squad of All-Americas Coach Stewart said he was satisfied his club would win "owing to team work and the fact that they have played together all season."

On Thanksgiving Day in New York, Mark Twain celebrated his seventieth birthday. Those who visited the old man at his home

pronounced him hale and hearty. "No one who looks at him, talks with him, would think of calling him aged," insisted one press account. "His hazel eyes have lost none of their piercing brilliance and his voice rings out with all its former sonority."

In Washington, Senator Hale announced that he endorsed Secretary Bonaparte's attitude in opposition to an extensive building program for the Navy. In doing this, Hale lined up against President Roosevelt and Admiral Dewey.

All over the country, football teams lined up against each other. In Ohio, the Big One -- indeed, the biggest football game ever played in Ohio up till then -- was played at Massillon.

The attendance at the Hospital Grounds, although monstrous for the time, was still disappointing at 6,000. Some, no doubt, stayed home because they did not expect to find seats. Many Massillonians did not show up because they did not expect their team to win. By kickoff, the Canton people were giving odds.

Canton's stars played the first half brilliantly as individuals, but not as a team. Six of the starters had not worn the red and white before and had no more than three days' practice. It showed. Canton quarterback James kept taking time to explain plays to his team. Mistakes cost one opportunity after another. Even though Canton held the ball through most of the first half, the best they could do was Marshall Reynolds' 23-yard field goal. Heston, from whom so much was expected, could never get untracked; his longest gain was for a mere 15 yards.

Before the half ended, Jack Hayden, the Tigers' quarterback, matched Reynolds' field goal with a 35-yard effort of his own. With the score tied 4-4 at intermission, only a few Canton followers were having second thoughts. Most expected all that talent to get going in the second half.

But shortly after the second-half kickoff, Doc Rayl of Canton got into a slugging match with one of the Massillon players. The upshot was that Rayl was expelled from the festivities and Ozersky was sent in at guard in his place. It was the turning point.

From there on, with Notre Dame's Red Salmon a plunging demon, Massillon took control of the game. Whenever the Tigers needed yardage, Salmon would crash through Ozersky. Canton barely had the ball as Salmon slammed into the weakened Red and White wall until he had blasted across two touchdowns.

The final score of 14-4 brought Massillon the championship for the third consecutive season. That night Stark County's "second city" celebrated its first-place team with fireworks.

In Canton, some bettors couldn't afford a box of matches.