

## AND STILL THEY KEEP RUNNING

By John R. Bangs, Jr.

The most familiar story of long distance running is that of the Athenian soldier who is said to have run from the plains of Marathon to the city of Athens to announce the victory of the Greeks over the invading forces of Darius of Persia. He dropped dead so history tells us, but the distance -- 26 miles, 384 yards -- was carefully recorded and has become our modern marathon run.

Actually the history of running goes back to time immemorial, when fleetness of foot and endurance of body were paramount in preventing the sudden death that lurked in every shadow of the prehistoric jungle.

The first recorded feat of great running is to be found in the Bible. A messenger ran from a battle scene to David at Jerusalem to bring him the news that Saul had been slain.

During the time of the ancient Olympic games, more emphasis was put upon sprinting than the longer races. Generally speaking the distances run were "one stadia" or about 685 yards, that is, once around the ancient amphitheater. In 1896 the year of the first modern Olympic games, the marathon run was

introduced and won by Louis, a Greek peasant boy.

No outstanding foot races were held in this country until after the Civil War. Without a doubt great races were run and individual effort expended in various parts of the world, but they failed to find their way on the record books. Reports of marvelous performances however have reached us from many sources.

From the jungle lands of Africa and South America come stories of marvelous powers of endurance displayed by native runners. In Peru is said to be an almost extinct race of Inca Indians who run great distances and who have remarkable powers of endurance which is augmented by a stimulant derived from chewing cocoa leaves.

The Indian tribes of North America all have had their famous runners, even down to this day. The Yaqui Indians of Mexico and the Hopi tribe of New Mexico are perhaps the best known for their remarkable feats of endurance.

The last American to win the Olympic Marathon was Johnny Hayes, who won the classic event in 1908. He trained for the event by running around the roof garden of John Wanamaker's store in Philadelphia. His victory was a peculiar one. Dorando Petri, the Italian, far ahead of the field staggered into the Olympic stadium at London. He fell but rose again. Then he staggered and

fell once more. A kind hearted official helped him so that he was able to break the tape. But this aid brought disqualification. Some minutes later Johnny Hayes trotted across the line and was awarded the victory.

Hayes' victory had a stimulating effect upon American distance runnings. Cross Country and distance running clubs sprang up all over the country. Young America took to running suits and the great outdoors. It was during this period (1908-10) that Cornell Cross Country was at its height. You remember she won the Intercollegiate Cross Country championship continuously from 1902 to 1911.

But now to get down to the present day. Wreck Welch is Cornell's ninth individual winner of the Intercollegiate Cross Country run. He follows the footsteps of:

H. C. (Hobe) Young, winner in 1908.

Tel Berna, winner in 1909.

John Paul Jones, winner in 1910, 1911, 1912.

D. F. Potter, winner in 1914.

I. C. Dresser, winner in 1917.

R. E. Brown, winner in 1921.

And, don't forget, of the thirty-eight Cross Country championships held, Cornell was victorious in seventeen.