By Ed Chalfie

Today, standing where the fleet of 19 and 21 companies was assembled in Field Day 1937, they will carry on a tradition with roots back to the nineteenth century. By 1900, Field Day's forebears was the Cane Rush. The rules for the Rush were simple: thefreshman class was given possession of a wooden cane which they had to protect from the sophomore. The competition began with a pistol shot, and ended 15 minutes later with a second shot. The soghs typically attached in a flying wedge formation, and the contest was decided by counting the number of hands gripping the cane after the final shot; the class with the greater tally was the victor.

Field Day traditions change. As new, feeling ran high and some individuals overreacted to much enthusiasm. Such was the case with Hugh Chadwick Moore '74. In the Cane Rush of 1900, he and others thought that the best course of action would be to remain in action after the final shot. Because of that strategy, and several broken noses and bruises, Moore died. This tragic occurrence signaled the end of Cane Rush and, the following year, the conception of Field Day.

Field Day began, in 1901, as a series of three athletic contests: a football game, a relay race, and a tug-of-war. Due to victories in the football game and the relay race, the freshman class won the competition, six points to three. For their efforts the class of '01 received the first Field Day trophy, bearing the inscription, "He who shuns the dust and heat of the arena shall not enjoy the cool shade of the olive branch of victory."

"Blow shot"

Through those first few years, Field Day elongated and expanded, marked by, in the years following World War I, to evolve into a two-day affair. During this period, the conflict usually began at a theater and culminated in a street fight located in either Cambridge or Somerville. From 1903 to 1956, Field Day's opening event was the sophomore class banquet. The freshmen had the task of disrupting the festivities as imaginatively and as completely as possible.

In 1936, three funs and games resulted in what is famously remembered as the "Tech Riot". Such "Greek coaching" as breaking windows, wrecking dance halls, smashing cars and subway trains and throwing bottles highlighted the fracas. The behavior of these aspiring engineers prompted the Boston Post to label the freshmen "hoodlums.

As of 1900, tragedy had brought about Field Day, this shameful occurrence caused another innovation: the first glove fight. This move was intended to restrict the combat to a small area, as in the Operation Native Sons and Daughters. Field Day was a common practice among the spectacles was to throw garbage onto the field of battle. This often backfired, as the participants momentarily forgot their differences and joined in piling the refuse back at the spectators. According to the October 21, 1933 issue of The Tech, the annual "garbage utilization in that year's fight included "eggs, tomatoes, oranges, cab- bags, bananas, squash, and fish, all of which had long been their best days.

Pranks common

Pranks have been carried out in several Field Day competitions. Under the philosophy, "If you can't win honestly, cheat like hell!" One enterprising sophomore class had an extension of their end of the tug-of-war rope to a nearby telephone pole. Needles to say, they won.

In another incident, the sophomore "captured" the freshman "prize" with cold beer. The frosh got the last laugh, however, when retaliation arrived with several fenceposts.

Up to 1957, Field Day was sponsored by the Athletic Association, and featured athletic contests as well as the glove fight. In that year the AA ended its participation because of the increasing number of injuries to varsity athletes. The administration of the event was taken over by Beaver Ney, the junior honorary, now a senior honorary. To the glove fight they have added competitions designed to test the skill and ingenuity of the two classes.

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