



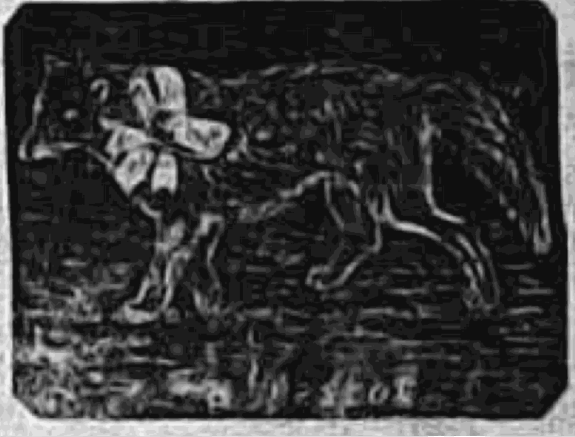
School Spirit and Tradition at Oregon State University

Spirit: Pride towards OSU
Tradition: Student-led activities fostering spirit

1892 *Origins*

Upon President Arnold's death, his replacement, President Bloss, authorized public games and entertainment for the first time—to include athletics. Previously, such activities were deemed to detract from studies. Within months, the first athletic event occurred (an intramural all-school "Field Day" made of Track and Field events), a football team formed, and the school color changed from Navy Blue to Orange. Bloss even held a competition for the writing of the first school cheer. The school's first mascot was chosen, a coyote named Jimmie.

Zip Boom Bee
Zip Boom Bee
O. A. -
O. A. -
O. A. C.



"Zip Boom Bee" originally was written for "S. A. C."—the State Agricultural College. Years before the college formally changed its name, students changed the cheer to make it less "snake-like." Sss-A-Sss-A-Sss-A-C!

Jimmie the Coyote, as depicted in the *Corvallis-Gazette*, December 22, 1893.

1909 *Building Tradition*

With spirit bursting at the seams, students needed constructive ways to express themselves outside of rooting for athletics. An answer to this problem came in 1909 with the "Rook-Soph Bag Picnic," the eventual precursor to the popular Junior Weekend, a tradition spanning several decades. The weekend included popular activities like the Rook/Soph Tug-of-War (between the freshman and sophomore classes, with a muddy slosh-pit welcoming the losing class), a preview of the yearbook, and other activities.



WORLD WAR I *Patriotism*

Spirit and tradition had opposite reactions to war; spirit surged while most traditions disappeared, replaced by intense patriotism. Athletics floundered during or after the war due to the best athletes joining the military and encountering eligibility issues afterwards. Most student traditions fell out of memory (some, like Junior Weekend, did survive), but most students increased school spirit, whether in a more enthusiastic following of athletics, or just an increased sense of pride in the college.

After World War I, new traditions quickly replaced those lost during the war, including the popular "Rhododendron Day," the original name for the Senior Excursion in which the entire senior class travelled to Newport, Oregon to view the Rhododendrons in full bloom.

WORLD WAR II *More Patriotism*

Like World War I, World War II increased school spirit as it brought a resurgence of patriotism. School carnival games replaced targeting faculty with Axis targets instead—better to dunk a German than a Professor.

While spirit increased, traditions dropped like flies. With football dropped due to the war, organized rooting sections took a hiatus. Many students were gone for military training, or even combat, and many traditions faded with their absence. When students returned home after the war, the class structure dissolved—traditions which preyed on lowly freshmen did not settle well with freshmen who were combat veterans, and usually older than their upperclassmen. For the first time, the college even had a substantial non-resident population, making some traditions harder to maintain. Some traditions lessened while others recovered; traditions appeared to make a comeback, but their foundations were left shaken.

1960s *Anti-Establishment ≠ Tradition*

As American anti-war culture shifted away from anything resembling "the establishment," college traditions became casualties of war. Class rivalries between upperclassmen and the freshmen too-closely resembled injustice in society and were abandoned during the Vietnam era. Most remaining traditions fell by the wayside—some right away, and others gradually throughout the decade.

Athletic traditions took their own toll, particularly after a racial incident in 1969 made a detrimental impact on the recruitment of African-American athletes. As the football program spiraled, enthusiasm for organized student cheering sections waned, and many athletic traditions lost prominence throughout the 1970s, lasting well beyond the initial impact of Vietnam.



President Kerr announcing U.S. involvement of WWI to student cadets



The Black Student Union organized a mass-walkout of the university in 1969.

TRADITIONS OF OLD

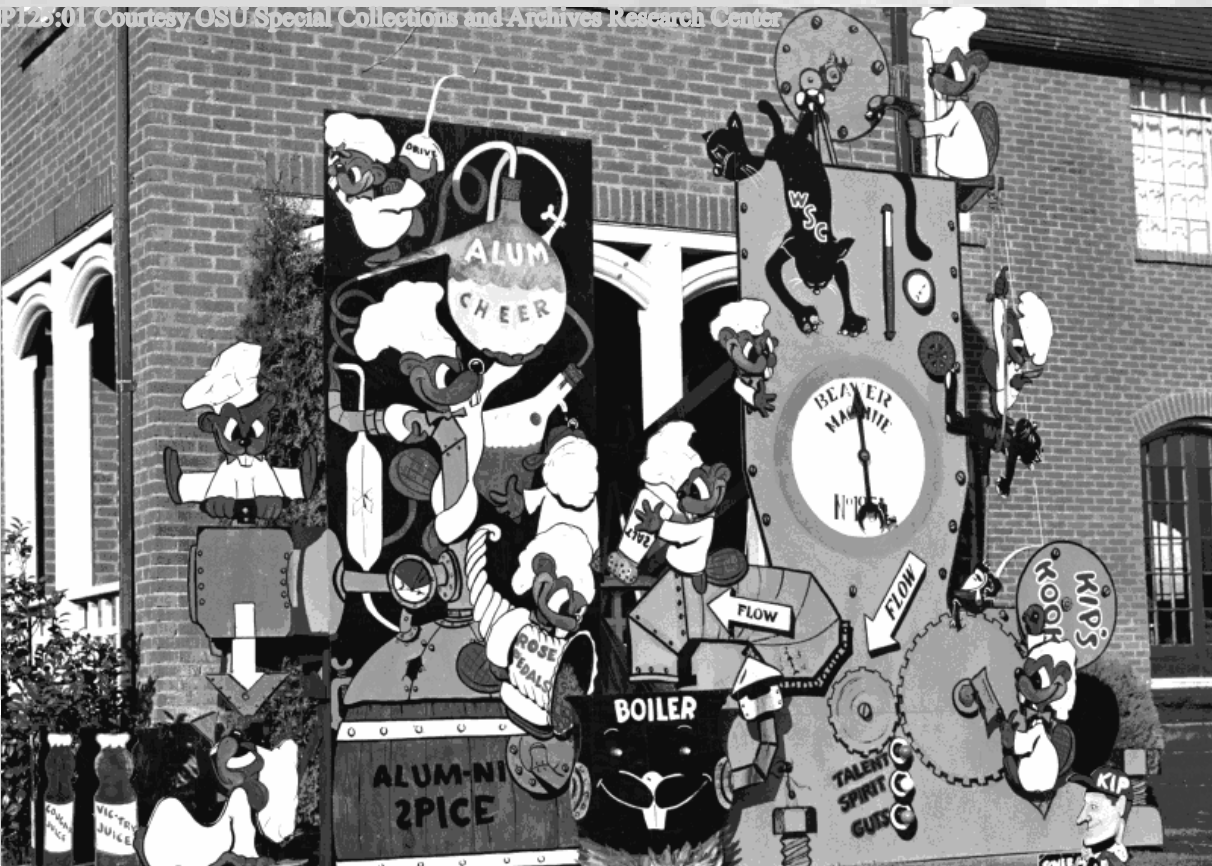
WEARING AND BURNING OF THE GREEN



Rooks had to wear green as an identifier of their lowly status—women with a ribbon and men with a cap. The tradition faded by the mid-1960s.

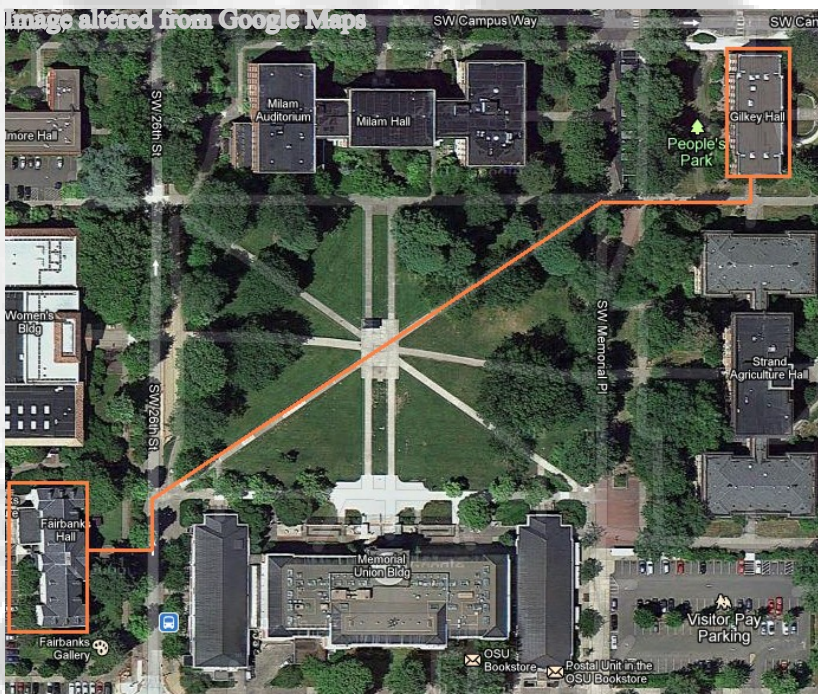


HOMECOMING HOUSE SIGNS



Each Fraternity and Sorority competed to build the best Homecoming sign.

HELLO WALK



Until it faded in the 1940s, anyone walking between the Dairy Building and Kidder Hall (now Gilkey and Fairbanks) would say "hello" to any passersby. The tradition included the entire MU Quad in later years.

BENNY THROUGH THE YEARS

1952



1967



1970s



1980s



2001



2005

