

Photo of the Month

1960s Rogers High School Spirit



RHS Cheerleaders
August 1961
Neg. # N020037



RHS cheerleaders at Cheer Camp,
Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas
August 1962
Neg. # N019910

Football coach Bum Phillips once said, "Winning is only half of it. Having fun winning is the other half." Perhaps this is true. James Hales dedicated a section of his book, *The Fabulous 1960s in Rogers, Arkansas*, to the high school. The chapter is brimming with the smiling, proud faces of Rogers High athletes and the statistics which tell of a winning Mounties tradition during the decade. More importantly, though, the images show kids having fun involved in sports. But, is winning necessary to have fun? The answer must be no, but winning certainly doesn't hurt school spirit.

The history of Rogers football alone during the 1960s provides a basis for this pride. The football team was undefeated in 1960, 1962, and 1964 and earned District 1-AA Championships in 1960, 1962, 1964, 1967, and 1969. In fact, 1964 proved to be a year full of championship excitement when the Mounties became undefeated state champions under the leadership of Coaches Bond and Lewellen, while the University of Arkansas Razorbacks won the national championship at the same time.

As the Mounties played for championships, they weren't alone in the effort. The cheerleaders during the 1964 championship season included Lynn Larimore (head cheerleader), Donna Deason, Judy Hawksley, Cathy Hubbard, Karen Weber, Marcia Winkleman, and Nancy Woods. Cheerleaders were as important to the team as good quarterbacks, receivers, or coaches – they motivated the team and drew the crowd into the fight on the field. They embodied the notion of school spirit and built excitement against arch rivals at countless pep rallies. And this aspect of Mounties athletics took as much dedication and work as demanded from other teams. Pictured at right is an image of the Mounties squad practicing in 1961.

An important part of building a successful cheerleading squad required hours of practice and many schools took advantage of the training offered through Cheer Camps, which were sponsored by the National Cheerleaders Association. Rogers High was no exception and many cheerleaders attended the camps over the years. The image at lower right shows Mounties cheerleaders at Southern Methodist University clowning for the camera in August 1962.

Lawrence Herkimer, a former male cheerleader at Southern Methodist University in the 1940s, developed the Cheer Camps, the National Cheerleaders Association, and many of the standards seen in cheerleading. In particular, the “herkie” became a popular finish for routines, which incorporates “an arm straight up, the other hand on the hip, one leg straight out, and the other bent back” while the cheerleader jumps in the air. Herkimer, who was an instructor at SMU, decided to devote his full attention to the camps after they became so popular that they were eventually taught on college campuses across the nation each summer. His Cheerleader Supply Company also developed and supplied the pleated skirts, snug sweaters, and pom-poms that are so identified with cheerleading.

The camps did more than simply teach technical cheerleading routines to the young ladies. Often times, the experience built camaraderie between the cheerleaders in a team environment where they could compete and have a great deal of fun, as illustrated in the pictures. The Mounties cheerleaders received top honors at the Southwest Cheerleader Camp in Dallas, Texas in 1960. While this honor may not have received the same level of praise as other championships, it remains a part of the winning tradition of Rogers High School sports.

By John Burroughs, Assistant Director and Robert Rousey, Museum Guide