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Preliminary model of Hall of Fame shows football motif.

Editors' Note: The idea for a professional football hall of fame was first advanced through the pages of the Canton (Ohio) Repository. Chuck Such, coauthor of this article and sports editor of the Repository, assisted the National Football League in formulating final plans, and citizens of Canton contributed \$400,000 to construct the new "action" museum dedicated to pro football.

MY JOB AS DIRECTOR of the National Professional Football Hall of Fame is a dream for somebody who likes those sentimental yarns that sport always seems to spawn.

Since I left as general manager of the Washington Redskins to take this post, I've been on one of the biggest treasure hunts in sports history. I've traveled the country hunting for items which have historical ties with pro football—uniforms of the old greats, early trophies, and various "firsts" in the evolution of the game.

It's funny, but you find mementos as much by luck as by diligence. About a year ago, a woman bedded down her dog with an old sweater, then began to read the newspaper. She saw an item saying I was looking for memorabilia of Jim Thorpe, the great Indian athlete. She remembered that when she was a girl, Jim had given her a sweater awarded him at Carlisle, the Indian trade school.

Always great with kids, Jim had pointed to a ribbon sewn in the sweater by an Indian girl and said: "That's for good luck. Never remove it." That was a couple of decades ago. Where was the sweater now? Why, of course—

THE STORY BEHIND

Pro Football's Hall of Fame

the dog was sleeping on it! That's how I got the Thorpe sweater for our display. It still has the ribbon sewn in it.

The Hall of Fame will open with big ceremonies next Saturday, Sept. 7, when we'll also install 17 members of the Hall, all prominent in founding present-day pro football. But the Hall isn't just displays of old sweaters and trophies. It's what we call an "action" museum. Electronic audio and visual devices will allow you to hear or see games of the past and learn exactly how great those famous old-timers were.

We built the Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio, because it is the cradle of pro football as we know it today. On Sept. 17, 1920, a group of men sat on the running boards of cars in the Hupmobile showroom in Canton and planned the first league (which since has become the National Football League) with Jim Thorpe as president. Of course, they played for pay before 1920, especially in Ohio, which is a real hotbed of the game, but this was the beginning of big-league football. The people of Canton donated \$400,000 to build the shrine, and the city provided a 14-acre park for its site.

Some of the items I've collected dramatize how pro football has grown since then. I have the sales papers of the Duluth (Minn.) Eskimos, for instance. The owner sold the team for \$1. Today if you wanted to buy a pro team (and could find a seller), you'd need about \$3½ million!

Those Duluth Eskimos, incidentally, have provided me with some of my best finds. Imagine coming across a giant iron-ribbed trunk painted in gay colors and opening it to find football outfits—and a dismantled female mannequin

Professional football history will recall the famed Canton Bulldogs, first champions (left), and the great Jim Thorpe.



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