



# THE COFFIN CORNER

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## KEEP A-GOIN': The Life of Lone Star Dietz

by Tom Benjey, (Tuxedo Press)

More info visit: [www.lonestardietz.com](http://www.lonestardietz.com)

Review by John Vorperian.

"No coach ever won a game by what he knows; it's what his players learned." -- AMOS ALONZO STAGG

Is the key to Wins and Championships having scholars and wags on your squad? As football researchers we know an assembled brain trust won't result in an automatic perfect season. William 'Lone Star' Dietz's teams did not have franchise players but he gave them designs and schemes that successfully befuddled the opposition. In addition to upping his men's athletic confidence with a novel playbook, Dietz insisted on having the entire student body on board in support of the gridiron program. Where ever he went Wazzu-Washington State College (today's Washington State University Cougars), Louisiana Polytechnic Institute (now Louisiana Tech Bulldogs), Wyoming Cowboys, or Reading Pennsylvania's Albright College, Dietz got the campus abuzz in grid gab. Media control and mental spin done well before 24 hour sports talk radio, video highlight game centers, and team psychologists, such tactics speaks volumes about this first modern football coach.

**KEEP A-GOIN': The Life of Lone Star Dietz** easily reads like a screenplay. William Dietz's dynamic personality and compelling life tale makes one wonder does KEEP A-GOIN' get to movie theaters in 2008 or '09? Author Tom Benjey has done a masterful job constructing a detailed approach on Dietz. Or as we say here in the Big Apple, "Four Stars for 'Lone Star'."

Who was William 'Lone Star' Dietz? He was a man of many talents, graphic artist, theatrical actor, college instructor, AKC enthusiast, dog breeder, singer, semi-pro baseball player, movie producer, and football coach. From 1909 to 1911 Dietz played for the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. The Pennsylvania academy was an early inter-collegiate football powerhouse. From 1893 to the Teens the tiny Keystone State School garnered a winning reputation besting most opponents and keeping a tight score against behemoth eastern university powers. Carlisle produced a number of All-Americans, Isaac Seneca, Frank Hudson, Charles Williams, Wilson Charles, Albert Exendine, and in particular-megastar-Jim Thorpe.

Dietz went from star tackle to the coaching ranks. He remained with Carlisle as an Assistant Coach and learned from the legendary Glenn S. "Pop" Warner. 1915 marked his initial year as a Head Coach.

Washington State College became the beneficiary. By 1916 everything was coming up roses for W.S.C. as Dietz got his team to Pasadena. The Tournament of Roses game resulted in a Wazzu 14-0 upset over Brown University led by Fritz Pollard.

Curse of the Bambino, well how about Curse of Lone Star? To author Benjey's credit KEEP A-GOIN' devotes an intriguing chapter on a heady hex. In sum, since Dietz's stinging and surprising separation from W.S.C, the Crimson and Gray have not won another Rose Bowl.

Representing New England in the NFL and bringing the Broken Shoelace play to the pro game Lone Star's coaching skills were employed by George Preston Marshall's universe. Tom Benjey delightfully regales the 1933 Boston Braves a/k/a Redskins under Dietz's leadership

Aside from the football career Lone Star's family upbringing, heritage, and domestic life are set forth. Utilizing multiple sources Benjey has admirably written a comprehensive account of Dietz's parentage.

Dietz may be the only individual involved with maternity proceedings brought by the U.S. Government no less. Even today Dietz's background is a cause of other litigation as activists seek to strip the Washington club's current moniker.

**KEEP A-GOIN'** will put you on the right track in learning more about this clever coach. Last year William 'Lone Star' Dietz's name was on the College Football Hall of Fame nominee ballot for the first time. He missed induction by a single vote. Don't miss this compelling biography.

John Vorperian resides in New York. He is Host & Producer BEYOND THE GAME a community syndicated cable television sports show and an active PFRA member and belongs to Society of American Baseball Research (SABR).

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