

FAMOUS HASBEENS NO. 7

Was Star Performer at Methodist College in the Happy Days and Came Back as Graduate Coach and Near Mexican Athlete.

BY AL G. WADSWELL.

QUITE some give, this fellow Boyd Comstock. He is graduate coach at U.S.C., owner of an orange plantation, and a member of the City Council of Glendora. At one time he was quite some athlete, but that was before there were any Fred Kallies or Fred Thompsons in the ring. He was almost a half-light, too, but he wasn't.

Comstock first broke into athletics in Chicago. While a member of the first year class of Northwest Division High School he won the Chicago playground championship in the pole vault at eight feet six inches, and received one fine gold medal which turned to copper two months later. This was in 1901. That summer his people came out to California and brought the kid pole vaulter along for luck.

The Comstock family located in The Palms and the prize son was sent to Santa Monica High School. He soon

posed in the first Los Angeles county intercollegiate meet, which was held in the Harvard School field, and won first place and the championship in the pole vault at one foot three inches over Crowley of Trinity Polytechnic. It was a cold day. The Santa Monica rosters stood around him to break the wind and they almost fell at his feet when he won the event.

A little fray with the principal resulted in Comstock's making a quick getaway from Santa Monica High. He laid off for a season and worked on the family walnut ranch.

A young theological student named Ashcraft was preaching at The Palms and "Commie" was treasurer of the Methodist Sunday-school there. The racket preacher told our hero about the great university with a prep department, where nifty boys with high school athletic records were as welcome as the flowers in May. It seemed well and "Commie" thought it over.

Several weeks later the polo vaulter decided to up and take a look at the Methodist university. He hitchhiked the old gray mare to the ancient rig and drove out to Inwood field. There wasn't much to see. Charles Parsons, the optician, Charles Broderson, the big "Swede," and Harvey Holman, the coach, were about all he could find. The high fence had not been built around the field and all that stood for a real university was a shabby brick building with badly-worn stone walls. The old place made a favorable impression on the lad, and after the walnut crop had been taken care of "Commie" showed up at U.S.C. and registered as a prep.

That spring he went out for the track team and won the one mile screen as a pole vaulter. He was the only wire in this event, ever listed at the local university. Never had a U.S.C. vaulter gone higher than 12 feet 6 inches, and Comstock cleared 14 feet in practice.

In the October meet, which was the first one ever won by U.S.C., he beat Bruce Merrill at 19 feet 1 inch, and set a new Southern California record for the event.

Famous had one of her annual parties lodged against the Methodist bench that season, and Comstock did not get a crack at Roy Davis, the Claremont vaulter.

From the first "Commie" was noted for his fondness for flashy colors. He had his track suit decorated with

a superiority of peacock feathers, and based on wounding one of those athletic college eggs on the head and on his head every time he jumped. The crowd-lead job was done in the color of the star vaulter fraternity and the star vaulter looked like a stick of Christmas candy on the field.

As a vaulter his turn was told: he but got over and won the pole. As he would light the pole, the crowd would cheer and the vaulter would be a flash of color. Legs and sticks jumped around in the air and the athlete barely in on the wire seemed to care how he looked when he came down. This was happened for his first injury, a sprained ankle.

In the first meet with St. Vincent's he had to withdraw. The Saturday came to the front and put the Southern California record at 11 feet. The track field stood solid. Richardson came to U.S.C. two years since Comstock had set a record of 19 feet 1 inch.

The following year, 1904, the pole vaulter branched out a bit. He

competed against Occidental in the intercollegiate meet. He won the pole vault and took second place in the 100 yard dash. "Commie" made the All-Southern California team that year and went north to compete in the California and Western Athletic Association. He was the only vaulter to clear 19 feet at Occidental. At Stanford Comstock took third place in the pole vault and was one of the world's record in the event at the time. Look for place.

The southern boy did better at Berkeley. He led for second place at the meet. He was a star. "Commie" had entered everything on the campus which looked like a pole vaulter. They started the first start-off in the afternoon and kept at it until the contest was called on account of darkness. The meet was finished first, second and third in the evening. The first vaulter to clear 19 feet were all in the band. "Commie" beat two of them and tied one, a dark headed fellow named Fred Kallies, who was taking 19 at 11 ft. 10 in.

The records made by Comstock the second year, made vaults 19 ft. 1 in. jump 36. His shot put 29 ft. He was a member of the first year class at U.S.C. and Fred Kallies has scored a total of 17 1/2 points this year.

Comstock had first base on the varsity team in 1904 and cleared out the only home run of the intercollegiate season. It was made of Pat Phillips, the St. Vincent's pitcher, who laid out to the Angels.

It was at this time that the athletic young gentleman almost entered the ball-fighting profession. A ball slapper named Felix Robert, who was holding forth at The Junco, happened to breeze into Los Angeles one time to see the Methodist boy clear the bar at 19 ft. He promptly stopped forth and offered to make Comstock the pinner Mexican athlete of the world. All he had to do was to appear in his new thrilling act of clearing the ball on the high. It was a tempting offer, but "Commie" saw some sense and disappeared and he decided to remain at college and later try his luck at throwing the ball.

The bear full figure was the star performer at U.S.C. until Charles Richardson came down from his home at Santa Paula and beat him in it every event. He was small stuff in 1907. He was an old-timer. His last suggested that he try the hurdles.

For about three weeks he trained and then he tried to clear the second hurdle. When the interclass meet ran off, he let Warren Howard a box of candy he had sent out the varsity hurdlers, Carl Elliott and Fred Thompson. All three of them had a gun he tore off down the lane and ran through every hurdle in 17 flat, winning the race.

The first meet of the season was with Los Angeles High School. Without the former St. Vincent star, had been enlisted at the High School and he sure was out to show the U.S.C. men. There was the happy days, and it was perfectly all right to knock down hurdles. Comstock fouled several of the barriers and took the race in 17 flat, setting up a new Southern California record on the side.

He was so clever at knocking down hurdles. Occidental had a very sly way to keep him from winning was to lock the slinks, and they did. "Commie" came out with a white guard lashed to his leg and started out to watch every movement of the lane. He did not get far, as the second flight put him on his head in the corner of the field. He was going to kick "Blissner" Woodson, and about seven feet from the goal and it might have been a good thing if he had, but he landed off the field and did little damage.

Bill Spurgeon beat him by a foot in the Pomona meet, at 16 feet. In the Stanford meet, Leaning fell at the third barrier. Comstock led by a full hurdle length in the seventh hurdle, and was passed at the tape by McFarland.

In the California meet at Berkeley, all went well until Comstock hit the fourth fence. When he got contacted he was on the track with a pulled hip. He limped back over and got hit in the pole vault, but the referee said it was crassly and kicked him out of the event.

This almost ended "Commie's" athletic career, but when the A.U. meet was announced he could not keep out of the running. He won the high hurdles at 1 ft., took the low slinks and won the pole at 11 ft. He made sixty-eight points for the varsity in 1907.

That ended Comstock's career as a college athlete. He quit and went back to Chicago for a trip. He came back in time to enter the Y.M.C.A. meet at Pasadena. The pole broke and he failed to cop the usual first place.

The following fall he started for Yale to complete his college course, but fell in with the captain of the Harvard boat crew, on the train, and ended up at "Yale" Harvard. He weighed 130 pounds now, and did not have a chance in the hurdles or in the pole vault. He won the shot put in the annual mid-winter, interclass games. Played on the class La Crosse team, won an open boxing tournament, and flitted around on the crew.

The next fall he was appointed coach at Riverside High School. The next year, he took up the coaching duties at Citrus Union High. The next year he handled the Citrus boys' basketball and was very championship coach to them in the country.

They took whatever title, county league championship, State, Pacific Coast and national intercollegiate championships. On the strength of the showing made by the High School boys, Comstock was elected to the City Council of Glendora.

This season, he came to U.S.C. and took up the duties of graduate coach. U.S.C. entered the most successful track season in history this year, and "Commie" proved that he was not a slacker at a crew, although he is a guy that still, as a competing



Boyd Comstock, Graduate coach U.S.C., as he appeared as a member of the Trojan track team during the season of 1904.