

Football Findings

*Artifacts From The First 100 Years of
American Football*

The First All American Team

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In 1934 Christy Walsh wrote that “the first list of players presented as an All-American team was selected by Caspar Whitney and appeared in Harper’s Weekly in 1889. ” Among those selected were three Yale players: W. W. “Pudge” Heffelfinger, Charles O. Gill, and Amos Alonzo Stagg. Heffelfinger and Stagg went on to considerable public recognition in the world of football, but Gill followed another path. After college, Gill attended the Yale Divinity School from 1889-90, then the Union Theological Seminary in New York City from 1892-94. He received his graduate degree and was ordained as a minister in the Congregational Church on July 25, 1894. He served as pastor of the Westmore, Vermont Congregational Church in 1894 and 1895 and as a foreign missionary for the Presbyterian Church in Peking, China from 1895 to 1897. He returned to Vermont and served in East Fairfield, Vermont, 1897-98; Westmore, Vermont, 1898-1902; Jericho, Vermont, 1902-04; West Lebanon, New Hampshire, 1904-06; and Hartland, Vermont from 1906-09. Remaining in Hartland he collaborated with his Yale football teammate Gifford Pinchot in writing “The Country Church – The Decline Of Its Influence and The Remedy” published by Macmillan Company in 1913. This led to his appointment as the Secretary of the Committee on Church & Country Life, Social Service Commission, Federal Council of Churches, in Columbus, Ohio, from 1913 to 1919. In that capacity he wrote a second book with Pinchot, “Six Thousand Country Churches,” published by MacMillan in 1919. While in Ohio he was also Secretary of the Ohio Rural Life Association, a member of the Commission on Interchurch Cooperation, and Supervisor of rural church survey work for the Interchurch World Movement. He returned to Vermont as Pastor in Hartland until his retirement in 1929, when he relocated to Waterford, Vermont and took up farming. He remained in Waterford until his death on June 2, 1959.

Pictured below is the Yale 1887 team. In the center, holding the ball, is captain Harry Beecher. Charles Otis Gill is second from the right with the moustache and A. A. Stagg is fourth from the left, leaning back on one elbow and wearing a vest. Pudge Heffelfinger joined the team in 1888.



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