

THE GREAT HESS CLIPPING COLLECTION

By David Laurell

His name may not appear in the masthead as the layout artist of any newspaper or magazine but Dale Hess has assisted in laying out and designing the most comprehensive collection of sports pages ever compiled.

His work, which chronicles the history of the National Football League, from its inception in 1919 on through 1951, is a one-of-a-kind collection of football clippings that took him and his father over 20 years to cut and paste together on 150 individual 17 x 25 pages. These "home made" sports pages are today considered to be the single largest private amassment of published football journalism in existence.

The story of Dale's unique collection began long before he was born, back in the days when prohibition gave way to speakeasys and bathtub gin, when women fought for the right to vote by day and donned their "flapper" wardrobe by night. It was a time when newspapers regularly carried the names of Woodrow Wilson, Al Capone and Duke Ellington.



The teenaged Erwin Hess began his football clipping collection back in 1920.

Dale had not yet arrived on the Earthly scene in those early days of the "Roaring Twenties", but his father, renowned cartoonist Erwin Hess, was an impressionable teenager who, after attending a Green Bay Packers game, became enamored with the grid iron and its warriors. According to Dale, his father saved the sports page that featured a story on that Packers game, thus beginning what would become the greatest

professional football-clipping scrapbook ever compiled.

From that day on, Erwin Hess purchased every newspaper he could get his hands on, and saved every sports page. At first, his collection was limited to the local papers of Milwaukee and Chicago. That changed dramatically over the following decade, as he also began purchasing and pulling

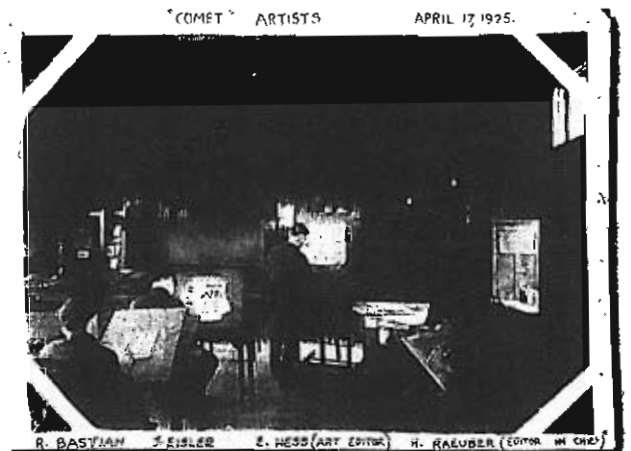


Hess collected every football sports page from the Roaring Twenties on through till the early 1950s.

the sports sections from papers from coast-to-coast. Within those pages were, not only stories and articles about the National Football League, but also the coverage of the old American League of the 1920s, the short-lived rival league which operated from 1910 to 1911, the All-American League, professional football from Canada and even stories on minor league and semi-pro teams.

During this time, Erwin Hess was not only collecting newspapers, he was also contributing to them, in ways that made him one of the most popular cartoonists of the era.

Hess was the creator of the widely read 1930's cartoon feature *Do You Remember?* By the early 1940s, his cartoons evolved into a new feature called *Americana Alamode*, which

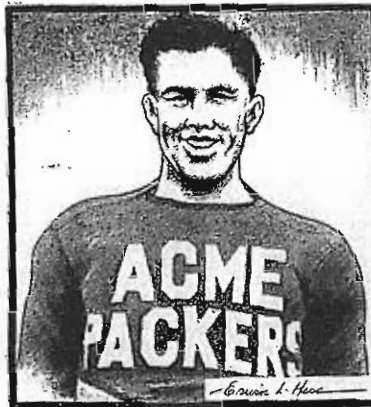


Hess entered in the early years of his successful art career.

was later syndicated nationally as *The Good Old Days*. During his career, he also served as an illustrator for a Wisconsin publishing house and drew the famous comic feature *Captain Midnight* for the Chicago Sun Syndicate. He was also recognized for his sports cartoons and drawings of such legendary grid iron greats as Jim Thorpe, George Halas, Knute Rockne, Pudge Heffelfinger, "Pop" Warner, Curly Lambeau and Red Grange, that appeared in numerous sports magazines.



In 1953, Hess, who by that time had become obsessed with collecting sports articles, even wrote an article himself for *Pro Football* magazine. He described in detail how he began



Hess drew and wrote the syndicated comic "The Good Old Days" in the 1940s.

his collection and how important it was to him. Following is an abridged portion of that article:

Back in 1920, when I was a boy of 14, I saw my first Packer game. Like the boy who is inspired to save ball player's pictures after seeing a (game). I saved the next day's sports page from a Milwaukee paper. On that page was the printed story of the game I had seen. I decided to have a hobby, a most unusual one, saving sports pages of Packer games and anything else pertaining to pro football.

My hobby was started! I managed to secure several back (issues) of 1919 papers and the papers were saved and put into the sideboard. My boyhood hobby wasn't just the usual passing fancy - mine stuck!

What makes my collection so valuable is that it is pro football history - complete! Nothing is missed. Whatever took place in pro football is in my collection, all of the games, general news items,

scandals and early "blasts". Everything, good or bad, editorials, features, thousands of pictures, cartoons, drawings... any little item on pro football.

When my pile of sports pages (became) very high I (came up) with an idea to give my collection a new look. I bought several hundred sheets of white mounting cardboard (and



Throughout his career Hess drew sports legends such as Jim Thorpe, George Halas, Red Grange and Curly Lambeau for numerous magazines and newspapers





By his death in 1977, Hess had collected over 50 thousand sports clippings.

began) transforming the original material into "sports pages". The boxing, bowling, billiard news is discarded and the football clippings are carefully assembled until an attractive layout takes shape. When the layout is satisfactory, the clippings are pasted in their proper places. The result: a sheet that resembles a

sports page but with every (story) about football.

I'm the "typesetter" with a pair of scissors and my son, Dale, who is 14, is the "printer." He helps by diligently pasting down the clippings.

The collection is a tremendous project. It means as much to me as the Bears (mean) to (George) Halas and the Redskins (mean) to (Bobby) Mitchell.

When Erwin Hess passed away in April of 1977, his collection, consisting of over 50 thousand sports pages, was the undisputed largest private grouping of football clippings in the world. Today, Erwin's son Dale, who is now 59, calls the collection that his father started, and that he now carries on, "a tedious labor of love."

Currently housed in his North Olmstead, Ohio home, Dale is contemplating the future of the treasured collection that he and his father

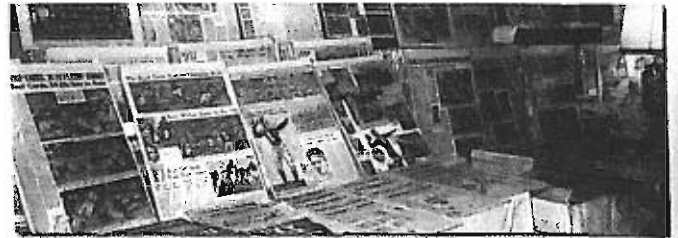


Today, Erwin's son Dale is the guardian of the incredible Hess clipping collection.



Clipping and mounting their "sports pages" took Erwin and Dale 20 years to create.

so lovingly labored over. Among the options he is considering is donating the collection to the Professional Football Hall of Fame or to a substance abuse charity that could use it



The Hess collection is considered to be the largest private amassment in existence.

to raise money. He is also considering selling the collection outright for a current asking price of \$125 thousand.

Dale says that if he does in fact sell it he will also grant the new owner with all the rights to publish, reproduce and exhibit the collection. "I want some good to come out of all his hard work," Dale recently told WeST LIFE reporter Jason Stahl. "Each page is camera ready for reproduction, (and) is ideal for a book. After (being published) the originals would make a beautiful lifetime museum exhibit."

If you would like further information on Dale's pro football "sports page" clipping collection or on the works of Erwin Hess, which include his still life and religious paintings, political cartoons, sports drawings and comic work, you may contact him by phone at (410) 716-1165 or by writing to him at:

Dale Hess, 26912 Sweetbriar Drive, North Olmstead, Ohio 44070



The Hess clipping collection is mounted on 450 individual 17x23 pages.



Dale is offering the collection for sale for \$125 thousand. If you're interested, give him a call!

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MARKET REPORT

November 2001

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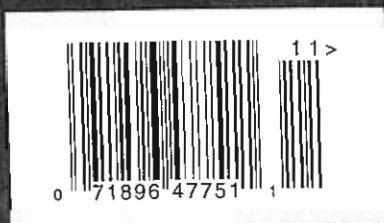
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