



## THE JINX

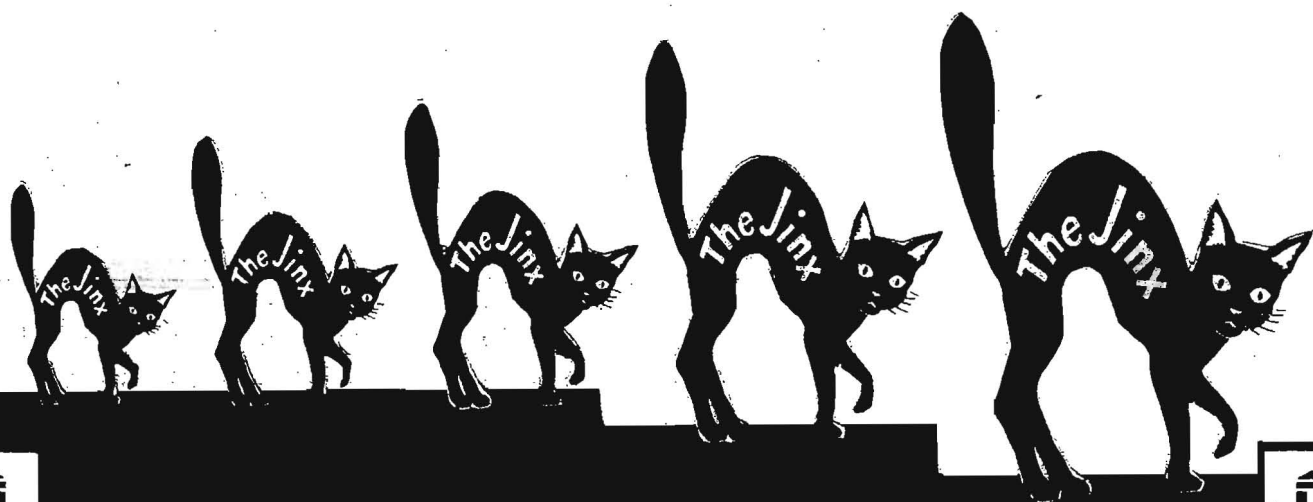
The mascot of Southwestern College is the mythical JINX, an indestructible black cat which brings good fortune to Southwestern teams and good favor to her student organizations. Conversely, the Jinx automatically places her hex or "jinx" on all known and unknown enemies of the Builders.

Following its resounding 41 to 3 victory over Fairmount (now Wichita State University) in 1912, the Moundbuilders made a limestone slab tombstone. They drew a picture of a smug, black cat and below the cat, inscribed the score that humiliated Fairmount. This memorial became "the most sacred possession of Southwestern students." It was set up in a pseudo-serious ceremonial, with appointed officials burying Fairmount in a black and yellow coffin. The "preacher" gave a most "heart gripping" sermon. The students were given a final look into the coffin, which contained a skull, possibly a bovine skull from the Science Lab. Then came the torchlight parade, after which the students, according to their "inalienable rights," stormed a theater without paying.

After Southwestern defeated Fairmount again in 1913, several loyal Fairmount students made a midnight raid on the Hoodoo cemetery and "spirited" away the tombstone. The word "spirited" was appropriate for shortly after the stone had been stored in Fisk Hall on the Fairmount campus, the guilty boys in the dorm were afflicted with smallpox. They relegated the memorial stone to the Library.

Southwestern students, unhappy about the loss of their memorial monument, broke into the library, rescued it and brought it back to Winfield. They did not return it to the Hoodoo cemetery, however, but placed it in a secret spot, safe from the pilfering fingers of the Fairmounters.

The conflict over the Hoodoo slab became a sort of cause celebre. It had caused so much distress and so many defeats that Fairmount fans felt it a duty of loyalty to remove its evil influence. Several Fairmont students made numerous nocturnal expeditions to Winfield without success. Finally a plan was hatched: Lincoln LaPaz and Miss Phil Hanna journeyed to Southwestern and posed as prospective students during registration in 1917. They pretended to be the children of a wealthy





## THE JINX (Cont.)




oilman from the Augusta area. Their father had insisted they go to Southwestern College, they said, and they were here to register. They did not pay their fees, but said their father would write out a check for the whole amount. They appeared to have plenty of spending money and treated a number of Southwestern students to ice cream. During their conversation, they said that they'd heard a jolly good story about a Jinx and wanted to know what the story was about. In apparent innocence, they asked to see this powerful stone which continued to jinx the Fairmounters. Completely taken in, the S. C. students showed them the stone in the college vault. While Miss Hanna asked dumb questions, LaPaz "cased the joint" and discovered a ventilator shaft to the vault. Then they all went out and had some more treats at the expense of the two "wealthy" greenhorns from the oil fields of Augusta.

The Fairmounters wasted no time. The next night a group of students drove from Wichita to Winfield. Worried over a couple "spooning" in a parked car in the area, they hid in the shadows until midnight. LaPaz knew his way to the ventilator, lowered himself to the floor, sprung open the lock, which opened the safe door. The treasure was there. So back to Fairmount went the successful group with the Jinx in their possession. They waited for chapel to assemble on Monday morning. The students struggled up the aisle bearing the huge stone and singing, "Fairmount will shine." Pandemonium broke loose. Never in the history of Fairmount had there been a more exciting chapel. Even the faculty reacted with unprecedented glee, and their dignified and dutiful dean lost his cool and is reported to have said, "I don't give a hang if we don't have school for a week." The Jinx was safely stored in a bank vault. Fairmount would no longer have to fight "against the uncanny, inexplicable, enervating, and baleful influence of the Hoodoo."

The twelve Fairmount boys and girls who participated in the Jinx escapade were students of distinction on campus and they organized the Jinx Club, which was a source of school spirit. Yet, the possession of the diabolical Hoodoo failed to protect Fairmount from its traditional foe at Winfield. As the war was drawing to a close, the Fairmount president felt that peace in Europe should be followed by peace in Kansas. He suggested that the Hoodoo memorial be made an annual trophy for the winner. However, the Fairmount Jinx Gang would share it with no one. They would rather it be destroyed!

Before meeting the Moundbuilders in the fall of 1919, Fairmount fans took the tombstone to a place on the Cannonball highway, west of Wichita, and blew it to bits with nine sticks of dynamite. It was to no avail. Southwestern defeated Fairmount 20 to 0 that year. In 1921 a copy of the original Hoodoo memorial was restored by students on the Southwestern campus. In the years from 1920 to 1922 the Builder-Shocker games ended in scoreless ties. But in 1923 the score was 13 to 13, a jinx number for both if ever there was one!



Why would a respectable, august, tradition rich institution like Southwestern choose a black cat as its mascot? Obviously those early students choosing to connect accomplishment with a black cat were *not* superstitious and must have had tongue in cheek and fingers crossed as they discussed the mascot of their victory. And, now we know the rest of the story . . . . .

from The History of Fairmount College

