

MOUNT UNION IS CREDITED WITH  
FIRST COLLEGIATE COURT TEAM

The basketball team which was organized in and which played in Morgan Gymnasium at Mount Union College, Alliance, Ohio during the 1891-92 season is thought to be the first college team in the world.

H. S. Johns, who now resides in Cleveland, was coach of this court team which could find no collegiate opponents. In the fall of 1891 while a student of Mount Union, Johns took instruction from a Charles Stolberg in Canton from Springfield, Massachusetts where he had learned the game of basketball in the Springfield Y. M. C. A. from Dr. James Naismith, inventor of the game.

Later in the 1891-92 season, Johns organized a quintet at Mount Union. He wrote to all the colleges in and around Ohio attempting to secure games for this first college team. However, there were no other collegiate teams playing the game at that time. For that reason Johns had to be content with sending his charges against Y. M. C. A. teams from the nearby cities of Canton, Youngstown, Niles, and Warren.

Mount Union again placed a team on the court during the 1892-93 season. This time Johns was able to find collegiate opposition. Hiram College, located 25 miles north of Alliance, had just organized a team. Oddly enough, when the two teams met, the Hiram Terriers defeated the Mount Union Purple Raiders by a score which would seem more probable in football---12 to 0.

The cornerstone for the building, which was destined to be the birthplace of intercollegiate basketball, was laid on Commencement Day, 1889. A catalog dated that year states that one of the speakers on this momentous occasion was the Hon. William McKinley of Canton, who later became President of the United States.

The formal dedication of Morgan Gymnasium was held in the fall of 1891 about the same time that Johns was going to Canton and receiving his instructions from Charles Stolberg.

From the time the game originated, Mount Union was always represented on the basketball court by a strong team. They have won more than their share of Ohio Conference titles, and are today perennial favorites in the conference race.

-----

Springfield College sponsored an athletic clinic at Springfield, Mass., last June for high school coaches. The court game was one of the important topics of discussion with college and high school mentors demonstrating and showing the various phases of the game. Springfield College basketball players assisted in demonstrating and explaining the situations devised by the coaches.