

ROY HOLCOMB

Roy E. Holcomb is Belton High School's greatest forgotten sports hero! In 1909 in an era when all high schools in the state (regardless of size) participated in the same "class," the Tigers won the state track championship by scoring 53 points (winning first in 7 of 13 events) to 28 for second place San Antonio, 20 points for third place Austin, and 16 points for fourth place Dallas. Holcomb scored 25 points (almost as many as the second place team) by himself with four firsts, two seconds, and two thirds and broke four state records. In 2001 he still remains the only track athlete to ever win four events at the Texas state meet. Yet this remarkable athletic performance by Holcomb and the team was forgotten by Belton by the 1950's as the school declared that the 1958 Tiger basketball team had won the first state championship in school history.

Senior Roy Holcomb, 19, won first place in four events: the 100-yard dash at 10.8; the 220-yard dash at 23.4; the 440-yard dash at 56.4; and the 12-pound hammer throw at 111'. He was second in the 50-yard dash and ran on Belton's second place 880-yard relay team; and was third in the 12-pound shotput and in the 120-yard low hurdles for a total of 25 points. He broke state records in four events (the 100-yard and 220-yard dashes, hammer throw and the 880-relay) and the Belton team "broke eight of thirteen State high school records" at the state high school track meet on Fri-Sat. and in the Monday duel meet with Academy champion Allen Academy (which Belton lost 58-55).

Roy Holcomb's athletic talent was not limited to track and field as the 1909 high school yearbook indicated that he also lettered in football, baseball and basketball. Holcomb was a catcher and outstanding hitter on the 1909 baseball team and a "speedy halfback" on the 1908 Tiger football team who was described as "easily the star high school football player of Central Texas" (the team played only 3 games). Roy Holcomb lettered in track, football, and baseball at the University of Texas from 1909-1912. The 1912 Cactus reported that Holcomb (as a junior) won third place in the 220-yd dash, second in the 440-yd dash, and ran on the winning mile relay team (3:26.4) at the "Intercollegiate Meet" against A&M, Baylor, Southwestern, Daniel Baker, and Austin College. He also led the sophomores to the championship of the UT "Class Track Meet" in 1911 by winning the 100-yd dash (10.3), the 220-yd dash (22.4), and the 440-yd dash (54.4) and won the 100-yd dash and 220-yd dash as a freshman at the same meet in 1910. Also, he had the fourth highest batting average (.250) on the 1911 UT baseball team which was 14-12-1.

Roy dropped out of UT after his junior year and joined the U.S. Army serving two years during World War I. He then taught school at "a little red schoolhouse" in Bell County for a short time before moving to San Antonio to coach at the Peacock Academy. He later worked for the Pacific Railroad in Bay City and managed car dealerships in San Benito and Brownsville before moving to Austin where he was a real estate broker until his retirement. Roy Holcomb died in 1969 at the age of 80 and is buried at Austin Memorial Park. In 2001 he was survived by his two daughters, Elizabeth Eberhard, 79, and Patsy Ann Acevedo, 69, of Austin; three grandchildren, Elizabeth Ann Acevedo of Austin, Susan Marie Savely of AK, and Jorge Michael Acevedo of Clovis CA; and three great grandchildren (the family knew little of Roy's feats until contacted by this author).

Roy E. Holcomb was born on Oct. 15, 1889, in Belton to John A. and Emma Holcomb. He was the oldest of four children (Roy, Ernest, Eunice and J.C.) and grew up in "Midway." His mother and father both died in Bell County by 1941, the four children moved away, and Belton forgot Roy Holcomb. However by 2001 the new Tiger Wall of Honor includes a plaque describing the heroic feats of Roy Holcomb, Belton's greatest forgotten (no more) sports hero!