

Friends and Rivals Remember the Little Brown Jug

By Bill Poray, Perinton Town Historian

A small reunion of friends and rivals occurred on a recent Saturday morning at the Barranco Clothing and Shoe Store on North Main Street in Fairport. The bond between those in attendance was forged on the gridiron, specifically, the rivalry between East Rochester and Fairport, known as “the Little Brown Jug” game.

The tradition began with the 1939 football season. The neighboring communities of Fairport and East Rochester took to the field, and in that first game, Fairport came out on top, 24-0. What followed in February of 1940 was an unprecedented celebration at Fairport High School’s auditorium, with a standing-room-only crowd. The theme was spirit and sportsmanship, with a program shared by both schools. Officials from each community were in attendance, when Congressman Joseph O’Brien presented golden footballs to the team captains. The surprise of the evening came when a brown jug, with the letters “E.R.S.” and “F.H.S.” was presented to the winning Fairport team. In subsequent years, whichever team won the game would have the honor of keeping the jug until the next year.



Three legends of the Little Brown Jug era: Lou Masciangelo (front), Don Santini (upper-left), and Don Quinn (upper-right).

Charlie Barranco’s store was the perfect location for the informal reunion. Known by many as “the Fairport store”, the front windows reflect local history, including displays of the glory days of Fairport football. The store had already been open for a decade when the first Jug game was played in 1939.

Among those in attendance at the reunion were Lou Masciangelo, the captain of Fairport’s 1939 team. Lou was known as a fearless player, and as a fullback for the Raiders, was inclined to run over the

defense, rather than around it. He earned a scholarship to Fordham University, but his college career was cut short by another priority, serving his country in the Army Air Corps during WWII.



Fairport football great Lou Masciangelo strikes a classic pose in this 1939 photograph. Masciangelo was inducted into the Section V Hall of Fame in 2012. When asked at the recent reunion why he loved to play football, Lou paused, and with a hint of a smile, answered in two words: “The contact.”

Leadership ran in the Masciangelo family. Lou’s three brothers all served as captains of the Fairport football team: Henry in 1940, Vince in 1944, and Roger, in 1957. All four Masciangelo boys were exceptional players, and each earned All County honors. Roger’s uniform is among the items on display at the Barranco store.



Coaches Don Quinn [L] of East Rochester, and Don Santini [R] of Fairport met at the Barranco store to share memories of Little Brown Jug games between the two schools. Many years ago, a duplicate jug was made so that each school could have a jug to display. Both schools have claimed to have the original in their possession.

Two rivals of Little Brown Jug fame were happy to see each other at the reunion. Former coaches Don Quinn of East Rochester, and Don Santini of Fairport went head to head many times, each winning their share. For Santini, coaching at Fairport was like coming home. The class of 1957 graduate played on the same team as Roger Masciangelo, under another legendary Fairport coach, Joe Cummings. Those at the mini-reunion were surprised to learn that a special shirt had been created by the Barrancos, commemorating the history of the Little Brown Jug series, which ran from 1939 to 1987.