

# A History of BOXER



**Born 1850 A. D.**

**THE SPIRIT OF  
PACIFIC UNIVERSITY**

Price \$1.00

*J. M. Sumner*  
*March, 1967*

## A History of Boxer

Born 1580 A. D.

## Spirit of Pacific University

Compiled by Blue Key  
National Honor  
Fraternity



Edited by  
MICHAEL ARMSTRONG  
and  
DENNIS CELORIE

This history of Boxer, the "Spirit of Pacific University," has been compiled by Blue Key Honor Fraternity from a number of sources. Originally an initiation project for two Blue Key pledges the material was later expanded, but was not prepared for publication until May, 1962.

Boxer has been variously described throughout the following work. Dr. John R. Roberts of the Pacific biology department assures us that Boxer has no biological origin. In mythology then, he might be a unicorn, but probably is rather a dragon, a dog, or just an idol.

This history is not complete. There are undoubtedly scores of incidents in which Boxer has been involved which, although worthy of publication, have escaped our pen. Of others we have only fragmentary knowledge. It is our hope to expand and improve the history in the years to come to make this work a more complete source of Boxer history.

Credits for this work are numerous and we mention especially the people listed below who helped us in the preparation of the volume.

Robert J. Hunziker '63  
President, Blue Key Fraternity  
May, 1962

#### CREDITS

Mrs. J. R. Shick  
H. E. Ferrin  
George E. Tucker  
Mrs. W. Pearson  
S. E. Bryant  
James N. Phinney

Peter Miller  
Ira Tucker  
Ray Wolf  
H. T. Shaver  
Lew Mertz  
Richard Faulkner (dec.)

ON a stand facing the main entrance of the house is a bronze unicorn. A black-robed figure who bears the proud and ancient name of Laing shuffles up to the stand and stops long enough to cast a respectful glance at the bright red animal—the family coat-of-arms. It is China—the Ming Dynasty—and the year is 1580.

Dr. J. E. Walker, China missionary and Pacific University graduate of 1867, clutches a reddish-brown figurine recently acquired at the cost of \$5. It rests heavily in the lap of the doctor, for it weighs nearly twenty pounds. There are triangle horns on its head, spikes above its spine and it has a large bushy tail.

Many thoughts are running through Dr. Walker's mind as he sits in the small, crowded train coach. He has already determined that the dog he holds is a product of the Ming Dynasty, which lasted from A.D. to 1644, and that it appeared in Shaowu, China, around 1580, which he believes is the birth date of his newly acquired prize. The man sitting beside Dr. Walker is a Chinese of average stature and he does not wear the look of a happy man, for he is running from the rebels who are tearing up his country. The Boxer Rebellion has already taken the lives of many of his friends and he is leaving family and business to seek refuge at the Christian mission on the coast.

In the late 1880's Dr. Walker sent the figurine to the United States as a present to his mother. With it he sent a note of explanation:

“Boxer was an heirloom in the Laing family, and when his owner had to flee from the Long Haired Rebels, he took Boxer with him as one of the especially valuable possessions of the family . . . When we were coming home in 1881 he wished to make me some present, but was hard up, so he sold Boxer to me for about \$5. I would not undertake to replace it for many times this amount. No doubt there are collectors who would pay \$100 or more for it. Take good care of him, for folk of this tribe are very rare. I have never seen another bronze unicorn of his size.”

It is believed that the name of Boxer was derived from the nickname given “The Iheckuan, Righteous League of Fists” by the Europeans in China at the time of the League's uprising. “Boxer” became the name of both the League and the Rebellion.

In 1896 Dr. Walker's mother presented the dragon to her son's alma mater, Pacific University. When it arrived at PU, it was placed in a special position at the front of the chapel, but did not stay there long. A chapel speaker one morning in 1900 told of an eastern university which had a foreign idol as its mascot. That same day Boxer was spirited away by Richard Faulkner, Class of 1902, beginning what is considered by many as the oldest tradition in the history of Pacific University.

Boxer dropped out of sight for a number of months, reappearing in the hands of the Class of 1906. He began making appearances at various campus functions and soon was the envy of nearly every individual. It was not until 1911 that the dog was again given into the hands of the University, however. It appears that the members of the Class of 1906 who remained around the Forest Grove area held onto the idol until June of 1911, when they released it on the campus after the alumni meeting of that year. When it was found in Brighton Chapel, the dog disappeared at once. It soon became tradition that the senior class would, if it had possession of Boxer, place him back on the pedestal in the Chapel after the annual alumni meeting. The class which got to him first was declared owner of the bronze figure.

A legend built up around the early years of Boxer history tells of a time when William Jennings Bryant was on the campus and asked to see the famed Boxer. He was obliged momentarily, when the dog was placed on the stage, but members of the audience caught sight of Boxer and broke into uncontrolled bedlam, tearing bunting off the stage and depriving Mr. Bryant of an audience. His speech was postponed until the next day.

Boxer was first separated from his appendages as far back as 1912 when his tail and one front leg were torn off in a class scrimmage, as they called it then. The classes pooled the parts and had a picture taken at the 1914 Junior Class Party, but the dog was broken apart again within weeks, the frosh taking the body and two separate groups of juniors taking the leg and the tail. He was reunited in 1914, the same year that the freshmen first got their rook lids. In November, 1914, his body was taken out of the Herrick Hall woodbox wrapped in a pair of overalls, and the leg was found in the attic of a home in the Forest Grove area.

In 1915 the Junior Class lost Boxer to the Frosh, who used him as their class spirit symbol. The Juniors, seeing Boxer in the Freshman Class picture, dug out an old rusty bell in a vain attempt to replace Boxer. Needless to say, they failed.

**B**OXER left the campus soon after the bell episode in the company of a Pacific serviceman who took him to France to watch over Americans fighting in Europe. When he returned to the campus in 1919 there was no fight and no loud welcome. His only appearance that year was at a chapel service in the midst of "Hail, Old Pacific, Hail." No one moved, they all just stared and the song went on.

Some new and exciting experiences awaited Boxer in 1920. He was stolen from a suitcase in the library and kept under heavy senior guard until he was hidden in a tree on the campus. The sophomores found him and took him to their picnic at David's Hill. Frank Broderson '25, got one look at Boxer as he arrived, yelled "Hey gang, here's Boxer!" and everybody got a good look.

Early in 1921 Boxer was flashed at the Freshman Class Party in the gymnasium. A small fight ensued, but he escaped and later that evening he made appearances at the Congregational Church, several homes, and a pool hall, before being rushed back to his hiding place.

Between September, 1921 and November, 1930 Boxer's appearances were mostly at small gatherings and meetings, mixed together with various picnics and a few flashes.

1922—Boxer visited Herrick Hall, three Forest Grove homes, and the Senior Class Picnic, where he was taken by the alert juniors.

1925—George Tucker '25 ran north from McCormick Hall for a mile after grabbing Boxer. After some pictures had been taken, the dog was checked into the Multnomah Hotel in Portland. Removed on a hunch by George Tucker '25, Boxer was the object of a search a short while later in the hotel by a group of Pacific students and two detectives.

In 1926, the same year the Pacific Blue Key Chapter was organized, Boxer had his picture taken while attending the Wassail Party. He caused riots at McCormick and Herrick Halls when he appeared there, and a final appearance that year at the senior party marked the last time he was seen on the campus until 1929. After a two-year absence from the campus the local and school papers launched a campaign that brought Boxer back in May of 1929. Thrown out by the seniors, he was captured and taken to a Hillsboro home for safekeeping.

Another absence worried four Pacific men, who felt that since no one but the seniors in that year had seen Boxer, he would lose his meaning. So in the spring of 1932 Rufus Fox '35, Merrit McKeel '35, James Corrigan '36 and Cyrus Dolph set out to track down the idol, following the cold trail to the door of a Mrs. Ruff in Hillsboro, who had been given custody of the animal by her daughter, Clara. Producing a forged note (in German yet!) from the daughter, the men gained possession of the dog.

In May of that year circulars were spread all over town announcing a Boxer flash at the south end of the campus on May 31. At the appointed time the people who filled the area heard a siren approaching. It was Glen Thornburgh following a local policeman. Boxer was thrown from the second auto and the fight was on. It took 45 minutes until Merrit McKeel could break loose, but he moved only a few feet and was swamped. Before going under he was able to pass off the figure to others who carried it to the waiting car of Betty Nutter '34 (Mrs. Walter Pearson). While Betty had been waiting with her car underneath some bushes at Herrick Hall, some men had chased her away and driven her car off a time or two, but she faithfully returned each time and was rewarded when Boxer was thrown through her car window. She sped away, leaving the pursuers in a cloud of dust.

March of 1933 saw a daring flash of the idol in McCormick Hall. With some clever sleight-of-hand, the owners slipped the dog into one of their wife's shopping bag and he was neatly carried out the door to safety. Boxer also attended the Phi Lambda Omicron luncheon that year in the company of Betty Nutter, then dropped out of sight for three years. The object of two minor skirmishes in 1936, Boxer's owners promised more action the following year, but they did not reckon on the wiles of their women.

In one of the most famed of all the Boxer stories, three men took their girl friends along when they rented a plot in a graveyard and buried the dragon. Wanting a bit of the excitement for themselves, they went home and enlisted the aid of the Dean of Students and returned to dig up the dog and move him to a new hiding place. The girls, Laurabelle Boostaver '40, Marjorie Byers '38 and Violet Soffe (Mrs. Virgil Simmons) '37, probably lost their boy-friends (Oscar Giesicke '38, Benfield, and Gerald Keller '42) in the deal, but gained a temple dog. The first the males knew of the switch was a week later when Boxer was flashed in Herrick Hall. They cried "dirty trick," the Index says in its March 12, 1937 issue, but the girls just replied "poor sports."

The day after the girls flashed Boxer, he was found in the basement of Herrick in a gunny sack and taken to the home of Florine Callahan '40. On a rumor that the Gammas held the idol, members of Alpha Zeta ransacked apartments looking for it, but had no luck. In April of 1937 Myrl Barkhurst '41 ran through the library with Boxer and threw the dog through a closed window to a confederate waiting outside. The dog had been hidden in a glass-enclosed book case at the west end of the library. Although the flash was successful for the owners, it was an expensive one. A month later Boxer was displayed inside the window of the Forest Grove National Bank building, but no one was willing to find what the consequence of breaking the bank window might be, so the Gammas held possession of the dog.

THE day after an appearance at the Gamma Banquet in May, 1938, Boxer was being taken back to his hiding place when Gammas Ivone Amend '37, Myrl Barkhurst, Lew Merz '39 and Tommy Fishburn stopped to get a picture of President Dobbs holding the idol and were jumped by a group of AZ's. When Fishburn tried to drive away with the dog, AZ George Racette '41 climbed aboard the auto and pulled some vital wires to stop the car. The group was able to hold on to the idol though when Fishburn ran across a pasture and gave it to fraternity brother Barkhurst who frantically pedaled away on a borrowed bicycle.

Shortly afterward the Gammas' long possession of Boxer came to an end. It happened when Howard Horner '40 and Forrest Bump '42 drove by the site of the Phi Bete-Philo picnic. Horner yelled "Boxer" and the car stalled. The Phi Betes now had possession of Boxer. They flashed the dragon at a Gamma banquet in the Grand Ballroom of the Multnomah Hotel in May of 1939, but only two Gammas answered the call of "Boxer" and they returned to their seats after seeing they were not going to get any help.

Luck was with three Pacific coeds in February of 1940 when a farmer called one of the girls after his son found Boxer lying in a field. It wasn't long before the three, Katherine Ninemire '42, Betty Mathison '42, and Donna Kesner '40, posted a letter to the Index advertising that he would be thrown out in front of the gymnasium on March 29. That toss-out came from a hidden vehicle and the battle raged for two hours, moving from the gym area to the Forest Grove-Banks highway, back to the campus and then over to Main

Street. It was this toss-out which was the subject of the first Index pictures of an actual flash, in the April 5, 1940 edition.

Two years went by and no Boxer flash. The Index was at work stirring up sentiment and in its first March, 1942 edition, it offered a prize to the person who found Boxer. The dog had been taken from the home of Zada McGee in Klickitat, Washington where it had resided since the April flash of 1940. One day Zada got a letter saying that the owners, Misters X, Y, and Z were willing to trade Boxer for three Boxer pictures signed by ASPU President Frank Vuylseke. With the aid of Clayton Judy '44 and Ellis Lucia '44 the pictures and the signatures were obtained. The trade was made at the Benson Hotel and Boxer returned to Pacific in good condition.

Only a month after the announcement that Boxer would be the theme of the 1943 Heart of Oak, Boxer was flashed at the chapel service. He was taken from behind the stage curtains, displayed momentarily then thrown through an open window two stories down to a reception committee. His front legs were broken off, but the new owners promised a better weld job.

The idol was flashed around the campus a number of times until 1945, acquiring new owners quite frequently. In late 1945, it disappeared completely when Tom Robb '45, Church Anderson and Bill Nielson '48 deposited it and found Boxer gone when they returned. No word on Boxer was heard until the fall of 1946. Fred Mills, Pacific building superintendent, was the subject of an article in the Index issue of October 11 in which he told the reporters that he had run across the supposedly lost idol twice in the past year, once behind the gym boiler and once hidden in the basement of Herrick. He had even eaten dinner with the dog sitting on his table, he reported!

**B**OXER didn't appear again in 1947 for a number of months and students began to get anxious. Someone stole a six to eight-hundred year old replica of the idol from the home of President Walter Giersbach, presumably in an attempt to stir up interest, but it was returned to the President's doorstep after he appealed that the replica not be flashed since it was extremely fragile.

Leonard Alley '45 a month later announced that he knew where Boxer was, but told the students that he could not be re-

turned to the campus at once. A full year later, a letter arrived at the Index office from the University of Michigan Medical School. The writer, Phil Porter '45, said that he had the idol and would bring him back to the campus for the beginning of the 1948-49 school year. In his letter he said that the dragon had been found in the woods north of Forest Grove by some relatives who turned it over to his mother. She sent it to Phil at the U. of Michigan saying that he needed medical attention—the welding at his joints was coming loose. The same article said that this would be bad news to the Lewis and Clark football team, who had earlier claimed to be in possession of the dog.

The September 20, 1948 issue of the Index reported that Boxer was in the hands of Mrs. Betty Straughan and three other former staff members, Ardis Ellingson and Dr. and Mrs. Dexter Amend of Portland. Hans Running '50, the current Index photographer, was allowed to see and photograph him.

The headlines screamed "Extra" and the banner told of a planned Boxer release Sunday, September 26, 1948, near the University sign in the southeast corner of the campus. The first announced tossout in eight years brought throngs of students to the designated spot. The idol was brought on the scene by Bob Franks in an Associated Oil truck. After a fight which lasted about 40 minutes, the Alpha Zeta Fraternity came up with the dog, all except one leg, which was kept by Buzz DeVito '49, who later gave it to the frat to be welded onto the body. The Index soon announced that Lee Prangle '48, who had gained possession of Boxer's tail some ten years before, refused to return the tail as long as the AZ's had possession of the dog.

The rest of 1948 was comparatively calm for Boxer. He was flashed once at an assembly, but escaped unharmed. Another flash took place at McCormick Hall. Boxer was thrown out in February of 1949 and when the mud cleared four Phi Betes and four Gammas held possession of the dog. They all agreed on Al Daniels '50, as custodian. Soon after this flash the tail was returned.

"He's a Riot Wherever He Goes" was the title of an article in the May, 1950 issue of Pageant Magazine by Ellis Lucia, telling the history of the famous idol.

A flash promised by an Index story didn't materialize on October 20, 1950, but the following week on November 2, it did. Art Wortzman '52 and Jennings Crebsted, threw Boxer from the roof

of Old College Hall into a crowd of 300 students. Emerging victorious were the self-styled "Lucky 13." They were: Norm Larabee '36, Joe Rust '51, Glen Robeson '52, Lyle Brown, Bill Carden '52, Ken Little '51, Merv Cooper '58, Bernie Cooper '51, Les Rawls '52, Clint Agee '54, Chuck Taylor '52, Jim Olson '53, Ray Kengas '52, and Jim Wilson '52. Boxer didn't appear again that year, but the following fall the "Blind Nine" (the remaining members of the "Lucky 13") promised to flash the dog on Homecoming Weekend. True to their word the idol was tossed out on the McCormick Hall football field (present site of Walter Hall) a few days after their printed announcement in the October 12, 1951 Index. During the fight, Boxer's two front legs, jaw and tail were torn off and the "Blind Nine" retained possession of the pieces. They announced that no further flash would be held until Boxer was repaired.

It wasn't until 1955 that Boxer returned to the active campus life. Written and spoken pleas for his return went unheeded and by January, 1955 there were few students who had seen the idol. Then in the January 21 issue of the Index there appeared a picture of Boxer sitting on a copy of the previous week's Index. An accompanying note said that Boxer was still around, but gave no other information. It wasn't until the following fall at Homecoming that he was flashed, and the battle was not a big one. Gaining possession of the dog were John Rudi '57, Ken White '58 and Gary Williams '57. These three enlarged their group to also include Don Dupey '59, and Jim Larson '57. The five had their first flash at Herrick Hall during a dorm meeting. Boxer escaped the girl's clutches, but White and Dupey were taken captive, perfumed and tubbed. The next month (February, 1956) Boxer was thrown out at Herrick. The fight was carried to Pacific Avenue and finally ended in the back yard of a local resident. Professor Jacob Bauer came into possession of the dog and threw it out much sooner than anyone expected. Bill Tiedgen gained possession and dashed across the campus, jumping into the auto of Ken Leek '58. The two took George Miller, Duke Anderson '58 and Ozzie Ray into their confidence.

**I**T wasn't until the Awards Assembly of May 21, 1958, that the next throwout came. After a tremendous battle where even tear-gas was employed, Ed Gayle '61, managed to break free and jump into a car with Dave Favor '61, Emil Torp and John Peterson '60. They drove into the Tillamook Burn and hid the dog. The Gamma members of the group let the other three, including Gayle, out

of the car upon returning to Forest Grove, then returned to the Burn and rehid the ancient dog. During the fight a front leg and part of the chest of Boxer came into the hands of the Alpha Zetas. Bob Wendel '62, a Phi Beta, got the other leg and John Mendonza '60, a Gamma got the tail. During the mix-up Gamma Steve Tucker '62 got the main part of the body away from the two original Gammas, Torp and Peterson. Tucker, Wendel, Mendonza and Tom Thompson '60 got together with George Radich and had the dog welded.

During the next two years Boxer traveled throughout the United States and even visited Europe. Outcry from the students grew and the Index finally announced a throwout on May 26, 1960. It didn't materialize, but on the same day the owners announced they would release the idol at the Award Assembly. Fifteen minutes after the assembly ended on the designated day a jeep drove from behind Marsh Hall and Boxer was thrown out in front of Warner Hall. The mass of fighting students moved off the campus, across Pacific Avenue, down Ash Street, then back to Pacific. Then Tod Johnson '62 with the help of Dennis McCaron '63 got the dog loose from the pile. Paul Thompson '63 grabbed Boxer and ran a block and a half, tossed it to Ron Eastwood '63 who threw it into the waiting car of Del LaRue '61 and Ted Swenson '61.

During the fall of 1961 Boxer was acquired by Rich Downs '62, Claron Ferguson '62, Bill Karcher '62, Dan Brown '62 and Jim Settle '62, all Alpha Zetas. Through the fall they flashed their newly-gained prize at homecoming events.



