

Entry from January 23, 2010
"Allagaroo!" (CCNY cheer)

City College of New York won both the NIT and NCAA basketball championships in 1950. The school's famous battle cry was "Allagaroo-garoo-gara!"

The origins of the "Allagaroo!" cheer aren't entirely known. Some claim that "allagaroo" is from the French "allez guerre," meaning "to the war." Others have claimed that "allagaroo" is a blend of "alligator" and "kangaroo."

Hutchinson High School (Hutchinson, KS) has had an "Allagaroo" cheer since 1901. The cheer was slightly changed in 2003 after complaints were made about racial origins of the cheer's seemingly nonsense words.

[The Sporting News](#)

CCNY doubles its pleasure - 1950

By Joe Gergen

For Sporting News

It was a sound unlike any other that resounded in Madison Square Garden during the post-World War II era, the battle cry of a school and a team destined for one triumphant year on the national stage. The students at City College of New York called it the "allagaroo" cheer.

According to school legend, an allagaroo either was a cross between an alligator and a kangaroo or a corruption of the French phrase "allez guerre" (on to the war). In either case, it was a unique chant for a team intent on completing a unique double, winning the National Invitation Tournament and the NCAA Tournament in the same season.

The Beavers were only one of many college squads that used the Garden as a home base, but as the representatives of a renowned public-education system offering free tuition to motivated students, they were special favorites.

They were to New York, guard Floyd Layne said, what the Dodgers were to Brooklyn. And their cheer ("allagaroo-garoo-garah, allagaroo-garoo-garah; ee-yah, ee-yah; sis-boom-bah") captivated New York in the early months of 1950.

13 October 1916, Hutchinson (KS) *News*, pg. 2, col. 7:

COLLECTED YELLS AND SONGS.

*And Live Wires of High School Have
Put Them in Bookform.*

In order that all of the students may familiarize themselves with the school songs and yells the "Live Wires" a high school organization collected all of the songs and yells of the school and have had them printed in book form. The book the name of which is "Allagaroo" will be out next week.

[OCLC WorldCat record](#)

Allagaroo.

Author: Hutchinson High School (Hutchinson, Kan.)

Publisher: Hutchinson, Kan. : Senior Class of 1926, Hutchinson High School

Edition/Format: Journal, magazine : Local government publication : English

27 March 1950, Olean (NY) *Times Herald*, pg. 8:

CCNY 2-Point Pick Over Bradley

For NCAA Title, And "Grand Slam"

History-Making

Cage Game Is

Set For Tuesday

By EARL WRIGHT

United Press Sports Writer

NEW YORK, N.Y.—City College of New York, whose sole claim to sports fame two weeks ago was its “allagaroo” cheer, was a two point favorite today to beat Bradley in the NCAA finals Tuesday night and thus become the first team ever to sweep college basketball’s two major tournament championships in the same year.

19 November 1976, Hutchinson (KS) *News*, "Game dull? Listen to yells" by Dorothy Melland, Young Kansas, pg. 14, col. 4:

In the olden days, cheerleaders at Hutchinson High School knew about four cheers.

“Allagaroo garoo garoo,” went the basic one. “Wa-hoo bazoo. Allagaroo garoo garoo.”

[New York \(NY\) Times](#)

VIEWS OF SPORT; *Let’s Hear One Last ‘Allagaroo’ for City College*

By JOE GOLDSTEIN; Joe Goldstein was working in the basketball publicity department at Madison Square Garden in 1950.

Published: April 1, 1990

Allagaroo

Garoo

Gara

Allagaroo

Gara. . . .

So began one of the most famous cheers in college basketball history. The City College of New York chant started to gain special resonance on March 11, 1950, and climaxed on March 28, through a 17-day march to glory by the C.C.N.Y. team. At the end of this improbable two weeks plus, City had achieved something never realized before or since - a double victory in the National Invitation Tournament, then more coveted, and the emerging National Collegiate Athletic Association championships.

[Google Books](#)

Hoopla: a century of college basketball

By Peter C. Bjarkman

Indianapolis, IN: Masters Press

1996

Pg. 63:

The popular cheer and battle cry of “allagaroo, allagaroo” (reportedly a distortion of the French *allez guerre* — “on to war”) which rang out from City College boosters at every home game would thus eventually captivate the entire city throughout the first two winters of the ‘50s.

[Google Books](#)

When Seconds Count

By Alex Sachare

Champaign, IL: Sports Pub.

1999

Pg. 34:

But what, precisely, does “Allagaroo” mean? Some say it’s a cross between an alligator and a kangaroo. The romantics on campus, however, prefer to say it stems from the French phrase *allez guerre*, which means “to the war”—which makes sense considering all the military parlance in sports. Teams “fight” for victory, games are “hard-fought battles,” a home run or long pass or three-point shot is a “bomb” and so on.

[Sports Illustrated](#)

April 03, 2000

First The Double, Then The Trouble

CCNY won the NIT and NCAA crowns in 1950, a year before falling to scandal

Marty Burns

It’s a blustery March afternoon in central Harlem, just a few minutes walk from the campus of the City College of New York, and Ed Warner is sitting in a wheelchair in his tiny apartment watching the NCAA basketball tournament. “Sometimes I’ll be watching a game on TV, like today, and I’ll have a little flashback,” says Warner, a star forward on the 1949-50 CCNY basketball team. “I’ll think back to the way we played and how good we really were.”

(...)

Students at CCNY, dubbed the poor man’s Harvard because of its lofty academic standards, lived and died with every game, raising arena roofs with their unique school cheer:

Allagaroo garoo gara,

Allagaroo garoo gara,

Ee-yah ee-yah,

Sis boom bah,

Team! Team! Team!

[LJWorld.com \(Lawrence, KS\)](#)

Shorter version of chant approved at Hutch High

Parent complained 102-year-old cheer had racist origins

The Associated Press

August 14, 2003

Hutchinson — Hutchinson High School has its 102-year-old chant back.

Sort of.

Call it Allagaroo II.

On Monday, the school board voted to approve a shorter version of the “Allagaroo” chant, which was suspended in January after a black parent complained that it had racist origins.

The new yell—proposed by an advisory committee and approved by the board—has been pared from 28 to 19 lines. It is noticeably missing the two words that generated the most controversy: “higger” and “bigger,” which replaced a rhyming racial slur that was part of the chant for nearly half a decade.

The board also agreed to the committee’s recommendation that the history of the cheer go up on the district’s Web site and be made available via hard copy or video for students and the public to see.

The chant was first written by students in 1901 and shares a name with the high school yearbook.

Supt. Wynona Winn researched the chant’s words and found some of them in a book about slave songs: things like “chicka,” “rat trap” and “bulligator.” She also discovered that “higger” and “bigger” did indeed replace a racial slur that first appeared in the Allagaroo in 1909.

[Hutchinson \(KS\) High School Alumni Association](#)

*USD 308 Board accepts committee's vote
to modify and preserve Allagaroo cheer*

After months of study and debate, a broad-based group of 18 community members, students, faculty and alumni voted to keep the Allagaroo but eliminate a controversial portion of the 103-year-old school cheer.

The final vote advocated striking the entire third stanza, thereby eliminating a controversial phrase while preserving the remainder of the unique yell.

The decision itself was not without controversy. Some committee members cited allegedly racial overtones in the original cheer and argued it should be completely banned. The prevailing vote reflected a competing belief that a modified version could eliminate any potentially racial references and preserve a cherished tradition.

In the weeks to follow, both positive and negative reactions to the decision were expressed. Some believed the committee did not go far enough while others argued that any modification whatsoever was baseless.

Although it may not please everyone, the compromise attempts to address some of the sincere convictions on both sides of the issue.

“From the get go I knew it would be a no-win situation,” said Cindy Knox '80, president of the Hutchinson High School Alumni Association and co-chair of the study committee. “But I'm pleased that HHS continues to have the Allagaroo cheer.”

The Allagaroo (Revised September, 2003)

Allagaroo, garoo, garoo;
Wah, hoo, bazoo;
Hicer, picer, dominicer;
Sis! Boom! Bah!
Hutchinson High School
Rah! Rah! Rah!

La shoo, La shoo
La shoo, Li Roo;
La shoo, Li ishabacka
Ishabacka Boo.
Hutchinson High School
Hey Roo.

Boom skit rat trap
Bigger'n a cat trap
Boom skit a rat trap
Bigger'n a cat trap
Chicawaw Chicawaw
Hutchinson High School
Rah! Rah! Rah!

[New York \(NY\) Times](#)

Irwin Dambrot, Dies at 81; Caught in Gambling Scandal

By RICHARD GOLDSTEIN

Published: January 22, 2010

Irwin Dambrot, who helped lead City College to the 1950 N.I.T. and N.C.A.A. basketball championships, only

to be engulfed in a national point-shaving scandal that tarnished an unprecedented feat and rocked the college game, died on Thursday. He was 81 and lived in Mendham, N.J.

(...)

Dambrot scored a game-high 23 points in City College's 69-61 victory over Bradley in the championship game of the then-prestigious National Invitation Tournament. The players were hailed by New York's mayor, William O'Dwyer, at a City Hall rally and by fellow students at a campus celebration. The school's battle cry, "Allagaroo!," echoed through Manhattan, and the venerable City College coach, Nat Holman, basked in the plaudits with his players

Posted by Barry Popik

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