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UA94/6/2/2 Edgar Stansbury - Red Towel

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This is a short version of how the Red Towel became a reality.

Mr. Diddle came to me one day in-mid [sic] 1946 and advised that I had to do something about the scarcity of towels. A review of the problem revealed that many of our students involved in physical education and athletics were not returning towels to the towel room after using them. Even when we opened lockers in the physical education and athletic dressing rooms, and search the village living areas where the athletes lived we were never sure what towels were ours. In addition, we always came up short, and in the process disrupted the privacy of individuals not involved in the problem.

At this time McFarland's Laundry had the contract to laundry our towels. I discussed the problem with Joe, the owner of the company, and based on our discussion instructed Joe to dye our white towels red. It was soon learned however, that when the towel touch [sic] a wet body surface some of the dye came off on to the user causing the person to look like an Indian ready for a war dance. We solved one problem, but created another. Not only did we stop the loss of towels, the use stopped too.

I called the Cannon Towel Company and they advised they manufactured a red bath towel that would hold its' color. A trial use revealed this to be true. I requested Miss Schneider, in the Business Office, to hence forth purchase only red towels. At first, the physical education group, the athletes and Mr. Diddle were reluctant to change to the red towels, because of their experiences with the dyed towels. Once it was determined that the red towels would not fade the red towel was accepted. This was the beginning of the red towel legend. The rest is history.

Ed. Stansbury.

Archivist's note: *The entire fax is printed in capital letters and has been modified for ease of reading.*