

The Lee County Legend

KEEPING THE MEMORIES ALIVE

Greetings!

Welcome to the first edition of a very special newsletter. Lee County has a long and storied history. Education, business, mining, and agriculture are four areas of interest that have touched all of our lives in one way or another. Much has been written about each of these. There is one more area that we must talk about when we paint the picture of Lee County. That is sports.

In each issue we will feature a team, an athlete, or a special time in Lee County history. There will be box scores and reports of long ago games and some of more recent vintage. You will find the names of grandfathers, fathers, and classmates who made the winning basket or the home run that won the game. And on more than one occasion you may even find your own name.

Lee County history and sports are high on my list of personal interests. I am looking forward to writing the history of Lee County sports. It is a vast history. I certainly cannot tell it all. You saw games played before I was born. You know the names of players you saw score the winning basket or hit the game winning home run. Together let us tell some of the history of Lee County sports.

Lee County sports...a story well worth telling. Let's do it!

Dave Audia
Publisher

LET'S REMEMBER

By Dave Audia



Lee County is rich in sports history. Several fine pro, semi-pro, and collegiate athletes have Lee County connections. Lee County has been the home of unique competition as a part of historic coal field baseball and the Appalachian League. Amateurs, including high school athletes and their teams have fared well against competition from other regions. Lee County sports venues have produced some very interesting stories of their own.

In coming issues we will explore the facts surrounding each of the facts that define Lee County sports. Join me as we discover our sports heritage. It will be very enjoyable to compare athletic achievements from the past with the present.

My desire to compile this history comes from my roots. I was born at VIC and also lived in Bonny Blue and Pennington. Sports have been such an integral part of my life. After playing in the state basketball finals and my Pennington High graduation in 1964, I have gone on to a life of college, Air Force, and coaching baseball. Through it all, I have immensely enjoyed hearing of the talent and accomplishments of Lee County athletes. Am I so different from others with Lee County roots? I don't think so.

The stories I know, along with the experiences I've had, will be my beginning. As we go, I look forward to hearing your stories as we record the Lee County sports history. Separating fact from fiction is a tough task, so please share your experiences and knowledge with me as I share with you.

Our sports give us such recreation, diversion and pride. The stories of the special people, times and events should be remembered. Let's write them down so they will not be forgotten.

BE A SPONSOR!

Contact us if you would like to sponsor an issue of the Lee County Legend. You will reach the folks who love Lee County.

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GETTING TO KNOW LEE COUNTY

The county was formed in 1793 from Russell County. It was named for Light Horse Harry Lee, the Governor of Virginia from 1791 to 1794. He was known as "Light Horse Harry" for his exploits as a leader of light troops in the American Revolutionary War. He was the father of Confederate General Robert E. Lee.

Among the largest early landowners in the county was Revolutionary War officer and explorer Joseph Martin, for whom Martin's Station and Martin's Creek at Rose Hill are named. He was awarded some 25,000 acres in the county which he later sold. He was among the earliest explorers of the region.

In 1814 parts of Lee, Russell, and Washington Counties were combined to form Scott County. In 1856 parts of Lee, Russell, and Scott Counties were combined to form Wise County.

Lee County's economy is based primarily on tobacco and coal. The county played an important role for settlers going west through the Cumberland Gap at Lee County's western tip.

There are three towns in the county: Jonesville, St. Charles, and Pennington Gap. There are seven unincorporated areas: Ben Hur, Dryden, Ewing, Keokee, Rose Hill, and Woodway.

There are nine elementary, two middle, and two public high schools in the county.

The earliest census recorded a population of 3,538 in 1800. The county had orderly growth until 1940 when it reached 39,296. Since World War II there has been a slow emigration. The 2000 census recorded a population of 23,589. Soon to be released 2010 census figures will tell if the trend continues.

Depending upon your direction of travel, the first or last place you will enjoy Virginia hospitality is Lee County. The slogan *Where Virginia Begins* says it all. For everyone that calls Lee County home one question says it all. *Would you want to be anywhere else?*

(From the Powell Valley News, Spring 1961)

BRAGGIN' RIGHTS

Each issue we will feature an historical question about Lee County history. The first person to e-mail the correct answer will earn braggin' rights (until the next issue.)

THE QUESTION:

What was the first public high school in Lee County?

E-mail your answer to dave.audia@gmail.com.

(from the **Powell Valley News**)

KEOKEE ROLLS MIDGETS

Keokee continued their winning ways Friday as they played host to the St. Charles Midgets, the only team that has outscored the Mountaineers this year. Keokee outscored the Midgets in every quarter to win 64-44.

Randy Morris was the big gun for the game as he tossed in 28 points. Tom Cooper was behind him with half as many. Tom England played a fine game for the losers, getting 18 points. St. Charles dropped to 4th place behind Nicklesville.

Keokee: A. Morris 10; R. Morris 28; Parsons 7, W. Adams 2, Cooper 14. Sub: K. Adams

St. Charles: Kirk 3; Woodard 5; Jesse 3; England 18; Hendricks 13. Sub: Cody 1

	1	2	3	4	T
Keokee	14	15	12	23	64
St. Charles	8	10	9	17	44

A FAMILY AFFAIR

Jonesville traveled to St. Charles, Tuesday, and played under unusual conditions. Both coaches are brothers and players are brothers to the coaches, which made it an all out battle.

The underdog Jonesville team was ready and came back home with a surprising 57-45 victory.

PENNINGTON HIGH BOBCATS WIN BASEBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

By Jack Keith

The Pennington High Bobcats are the Lee County Baseball champs. The Bobcats won the title Tuesday afternoon by defeating the Keokee Mountaineers, 7-3, in a playoff game played at Jonesville. The Bobcats and the Mountaineers had ended up tied for first place when the regular season ended last Friday.

Following is the box score of the championship game:

PENNINGTON

	AB	R	H
S. Smith, CF	3	1	1
M. Smith, RF	3	1	1
Pridemore, 2B	4	2	2
T. Ely, C	1	0	0
L. Ely, P	3	2	2
Robinson, LF	1	1	1
Parsons, 1B	2	0	1
Audia, SS	2	0	1
Edwards, 3B	2	0	1
	<u>21</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>10</u>

KEOKEE

	AB	R	H
Parsons, RF	4	0	1
Baker, 2B	4	0	1
R. Morris, SS	3	0	1
Payne, 1B	4	0	0
Maples, CF	3	1	0
A. Morris, 3B	3	1	1
Griffith, LF	1	0	1
Pennington, C	3	0	0
Barker, P	3	1	2
	<u>28</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>7</u>

Keokee 001 101 0—3
 Pennington 500 002 x—7

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POWELL VALLEY NEWS FEBRUARY 23, 1950

POWELL VALLEY NEWS JANUARY 1970

TOURNAMENT ROUNDUP

First round tournament play last Friday deadlocked Dryden and St. Charles girls 55-55. The playoff game Friday night however, gave Dryden a 54-44 win. Jonesville boys defeated Flatwood 46-35; Pennington girls edged Keokee 71-70; Blackwater boys upset Keokee 27-25; Jonesville girls won a 49-23 decision over Flatwood; Thomas Walker boys eased out over St. Charles 33-31; Thomas Walker girls upset Blackwater 58-25; Pennington boys defeated Dryden 44 to 27.

Saturday afternoon St. Charles girls eliminated Keokee 59 to 46; St. Charles boys eliminated Dryden 50-26; Flatwood girls eliminated Blackwood 42 to 37; Flatwood boys nosed out Keokee in a 37-35 win.

Saturday night Jonesville girls defeated Thomas Walker 57 to 41; Thomas Walker boys scored a 50-38 victory over Pennington Tomcats; Dryden and Pennington girls made it a 84-84 tie which was played off Monday night giving the Dryden lassies a 69-64 lead. Jonesville boys defeated Blackwater to end Saturday's play.

In eliminations Tuesday night St. Charles girls ousted Flatwood 61-55, with King looping 28 points to spark their victory. Marcum led Flatwood scoring with 25.

St. Charles boys eliminated Flatwood 42-38. Dotson led the coalfield lads with 14 points and Hopkins looped 11 to lead Flatwood.

Pennington girls eliminated Thomas Walker 80 to 74 with Yeary pouring 62 points into the basket to lead the scoring. Johnson highpointed the Walkerettes with 25 points while Estep followed with 24.

Pennington boys eliminated Blackwater 47 to 32, Moseley highpointed the Cats with 21 and Sanders led Blackwater lads with 11 points.

Jonesville girls won 65 to 58 in a hard fought battle with the Dryden lassies. Johnson hit the net for 54 points to lead Jonesville. Tritt led with 21 for Dryden, teammate Crabtree followed with 20.

Jonesville boys defeated Thomas Walker 54 to 36.

Lee County Sports - - - - -

Slick roads and cold weather continue to get the basketball schedule in a mess. Practically every game in District VIII and the Lonesome Pine is at least one or two games behind at this time

Speaking of getting behind, we seem to be having a problem in getting information on basketball games—both boys and girls. We have discussed the problem with some of the coaches and we would like to request that you have your scorekeeper call us collect, if necessary, on Wednesday mornings after the Tuesday's games. At that time we would like information on the Friday's games as well as any makeup games that have been played. We will appreciate this assistance and we know it will be appreciated by both players and fans.

Don Williams' St. Charles Midgets broke another record or so the other night on their own court when they broke the one hundred mark while playing Forge Ridge, Tennessee. The Midgets continued with the hot hand even after the coach had cleared the bench.

In other play, the T. W. Pioneers defeated the Jonesville Bulldogs at TW last week.

On Tuesday night the feud between the brothers Williams continued on the Jonesville court with the older brother coming out on top. Here, too, some kind of record must have been broken. During the first quarter St. Charles scored one point and the Bulldogs got five. After that the tempo increased and when the final whistle blew, the score was 42-37 with St. Charles the winner.

Dryden went down before Flatwood to the score of 55-49 on Tuesday night. Dryden held the lead during the first quarter but from then on it was Flatwood even though each team scored 11 points during the last quarter.

Pennington made the long journey to Haysi on Tuesday night and went down to the score of 53-63. The Bobcats were able to hold their own until the final quarter when Haysi went ahead by ten points.

Many are wondering who makes the decisions to take a school bus on such long trips when there are many private vehicles available. It seems that this ruling works an undue hardship on the players and coaches.



POWELL VALLEY NEWS SPRING 1932

Lee County Boys Star in Athletics

Four favorite sons of Lee and Wise Counties are on their way to make athletic history this year! Two in basketball and two in baseball.

Roberts, the husky lad from the Pounds, over in Wise County, is making a national reputation in basketball at Emory and Henry College this season, while another Wise Countian, Bill Carrier, who was bought by the Detroit Tigers last season, will report to the Beaumont Club in the Texas League. He will continue his fight to reach the majors.

Clay (Cowboy) Barker, star center fielder of the Lonesome Pine league, has signed a contract to join the Smokies in the Southern League in Knoxville.

Tyler Horton, former Carson-Newman cage star, is running away with unbelievable high scores and playing honors with the Bonny Blue Cardinals in the N-S independent league in Lee County and is the big reason for the long string of victories the Cards have won.

POWELL VALLEY NEWS FEB. 2, 1933

Charles Wacks Signs With Sox

Charles Beuford (Soapy) Wacks, catcher for the Pennington club in the News-Sentinel Lonesome Pine League last season, has been signed by the Chicago White Sox.

Wacks signed a contract with the White Sox a few weeks ago, but it was not until Chicago officials had investigated his college and minor league experience that they announced he had been acquired.

Wacks, who lives at Norton, has received instructions to attend the White Sox spring training camp.

Wacks is a husky-built young man, having played football for two years at V. M. I. as well as being an outstanding baseball player there.

Last season Wacks led the Lonesome Pine League in hitting, having an average of .410. He was also the outstanding receiver in the league. He possesses one of the best throwing arms of any player in this section.

POWELL VALLEY NEWS OCT. 27, 1932

Pennington Wins Lee County Football Classic 27-6, Friday

Pennington defeated St. Charles here Friday afternoon, 27-6. The Lee County grid classic was well attended. The visitors probably have the best team they have ever had. Kirk, bruising tackler and slashing line plunger was a scoring threat the entire game. His line and ends played a splendid game. St. Charles lacked the scoring punch displayed by the Glads.

Payne and E. Keel were stellar components in the Pennington backfield while the line was like a wall.

PENNINGTON		ST. CHARLES
Lucas	RE	Bailey
Wynn	RT	Parks
Myers	RG	Goins
S. Keel	C	Ricker
Lundy	LG	Ely
Moore	LT	Cross
Pridemore	LE	Hall
Cecil	RH	Evans
E. Keel	LH	Pannell
Bailey	FB	Kirk
Payne	QB	Yeary

Summary:

Yardage:	Pennington	322
	St. Charles	76
First downs:	Pennington	20
	St. Charles	3
Penalties in yards:	Pennington	55
	St. Charles	0
Passes:	Pennington	5, completed 3
	St. Charles	2, completed 0

	1	2	3	4	
PENNINGTON	0	7	7	1327
ST. CHARLES	0	6	0	0 6

Referee: Backus, Ohio
 Umpire: Bays, B. M. A.
 Headlinesman: Isaac and Richmond

THIS SPACE RESERVED FOR YOU

The Lee County Legend wants to tell the history of Lee County sports. Everyone has memories of the players, games, coaches, ball fields and unforgettable (and sometimes forgettable) moments. We invite you to share your memories. You do not need to be an accomplished writer. Don't worry about grammar, spelling, or any of that. Just tell your memory as you remember it.

Send your memory to:

I Remember
Lee County Legend
317 Joslyn Avenue
Pennington Gap, Virginia 24277

Thanks for sharing your memories. Together we will make sure we will keep them alive.

The Staff

HOW DO I GET THIS PAPER?

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TO:

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