

The Lee County Legend

K E E P I N G T H E M E M O R I E S A L I V E

Baseball and Tobacco

Tobacco Baseball Cards...Did Mother Throw Yours Away, Too?

One of the most anguished cries uttered by anyone who ever played baseball is the sad lament "Momma threw away all of my baseball cards!". This is generally uttered by a middle-aged adult male who has just read in the paper that the famous 1909 Honus Wagner baseball card was sold for about a million dollars. Some of the earliest baseball cards (and they go back into the late 1800s) were produced by tobacco companies. You may not have the Honus Wagner card, but do you have any tobacco baseball cards? Next time you want to see what is out there for sale check out baseball cards on E-bay. Here are some current offers for tobacco items:

New York Giants Chief Myers	\$79.95	Vintage Univ of Virginia Tobacco Silk Blanket	\$39
Washington Senators Schaefer	\$45.00	Complete Set Tobacco Baseball Cards	\$1211.25

The Lee County Legend wants to hear about the cards your mother threw away.

10 BEST REASONS TO ATTEND TODAY'S TOBACCO FESTIVAL

10. YOU LIKE MARCHING BEHIND THE PARADE ESPECIALLY IF THERE ARE HORSES!
9. YOU DROVE TO FOOD CITY, THEN GOT STUCK IN THE TRAFFIC ON THE WAY HOME!
8. YOU LOVE CROWDS THAT ALWAYS SEEM TO BE GOING THE OPPOSITE WAY!
7. YOU CAME BECAUSE YOU WANT TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN!
6. YOU THOUGHT WORKING ON A FLOAT MEANT YOU COULD RIDE ON IT TOO.
5. YOU KNOW ALL THE PRETTY GIRLS ARE HERE.
4. YOU DIDN'T REALLY WANT TO WATCH THE TENNESSEE/ALABAMA GAME ANYWAY.
3. YOU WANT TO CELEBRATE THE GREAT PROFIT FROM THE SALE OF YOUR TOBACCO CROP.
2. YOU CAME HOPING TO SEE AND TALK TO EVERYBODY'S RELATIVE, TICE COLLIER.
1. YOU CAME TO CELEBRATE BECAUSE YOU RUINED YOUR HEALTH AND BROKE YOUR BACK WHILE RAISING YOUR DISMAL CROP THIS YEAR, THEN DECIDED THAT YOU WILL NEVER HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH RAISING TOBACCO AGAIN!!

Hitting, Fielding, and Chewing...The Essentials of Baseball

We will set aside debates and discussions about the virtues of chewing tobacco. It can be said with certainty that the first players to pick up a bat and ball put a chew of tobacco twixt their cheek and gum as they took their place in the field. No other sport is so linked to chewing tobacco as baseball.

In a May 14, 2009, *Paneech* blog the following reasons were offered as to why baseball players are the only athletes in the chewing tobacco spotlight.

1. Basketball players would have no place to spit.
2. Hockey players would spit all over the ice. The non-chewing players would get grossed out if they were checked and fell into a puddle of saliva.
3. Football players have to wear a mouthpiece. Needless to say this presents spitting problems.
4. Boxers also have a mouthpiece to deal with. A fighter has enough problems with the jaw and getting teeth knocked out to chew.
5. Golfers don't wear mouthpieces so they could chew. They could spit all the way up to the hole if they wanted to. Ever see a PGA golfer chewing on television?
6. NASCAR drivers have one drawback. They wear a helmet.
7. Soccer players would easily get lightheaded from constantly running and spitting. Would they receive a red card for spitting at an opponent? If they both chewed it wouldn't be an issue as they could spit freely without grossing out an opponent.

Each competition presents its own challenges. How about water polo, volleyball, and pinochle players? Competitive swimming and diving, parachute diving, archery and rifle shooting, and arm wrestling have their own unique matters to deal with.

All sports are looking for sponsors. Do you think there will ever be The Skoal World Tour or The Copenhagen Challenge? In which sport?



Hitter, Louis Audia—Umpire, Hack Pope

FRIENDS

This is a game of Pennington HS in the spring of 1962 vs. an unknown Lee Co. team. With a close look, you can see that Louis ripped this pitch. He was a good hitter and always hit 2nd, 3rd or 4th in the lineup. He usually played 1B or in the outfield with an occasionally stint on the mound. At 1B, he saved me errors many times by digging out low throws.

Hack not only umpired but was the Dad of two of my best friends, **Charlie and Terry Pope**. Hack taught us how to throw the knuckleball. With that knuckleball, I developed into a fine batting practice pitcher.

Bill Halstead—Baseball Player

Bill Halstead (born 1924) had a stellar 8 year, minor league baseball career. In the 4 season span from 1948-1951, Pennington Gap was in the professional Class D Mountain States League, Bill Halstead was probably the offensive leader. Bill played outfield and pitched a little during his career.

Bill's batting averages for the 4 seasons were .282, .328, .281, and .381. In that final Pennington Gap Miners season, **Bill hit .381 with 181 hits in 121 games, 26 doubles and 34 home runs.**

The Pennington franchise folded after that season, but Bill went on to play for Big Stone Gap in 1952. There he played outfield and pitched. There he had a .338 average with 12 home runs. In addition, on the mound he was 5-3 with a 2.62 ERA.

In 1952, Bill was called up to play at the "C" for a few games. He returned to play at Big Stone Gap for the 1953 season then on to Middleboro in "C" ball for the 1954 and his final season.

Bill Halstead's career stats for the 8 seasons (7 in "D" and 2 in "C") were: 712 games, .314 Batting Average, 849 hits, 128 doubles and 110 home runs. From the mound he had a respectable 11-10 record.

Other notes of interest—Bill:

- Graduated from Pennington High.
- Played football at Appalachian State
- Coached the Pennington High Football team
- In 1964, when Pennington High played in the Boys Basketball State Championship game, Bill Halstead was one of the referees.

Powell Valley News 5/26/1922 Article

"NEXT MAN TO THE BAT"

We note that the St. Charles correspondent advances the idea in the columns of the Appalachian Independent, that an inter-county base ball league consisting of teams representing the towns of Norton, Appalachia and Big Stone Gap, of Wise County and the towns of St. Charles, Pennington Gap and Jonesville of Lee County would be a paying proposition....he would be glad to see the business men of these towns get together and talk over the matter to arrange a schedule to be played off during the summer and fall.

This is an idea that is well worth considering and the News heartily agrees with the suggestion.

(Editor's note—The following line speaks volumes about why the Lee County Legend loves the P V News writers)

There are at least three things that a real live town needs:

1. One or more good churches
2. A good public school
3. **And a good, bad or indifferent baseball team.**

St. Charles has spoken, the PV News approves, **who will be the next man to the bat?**

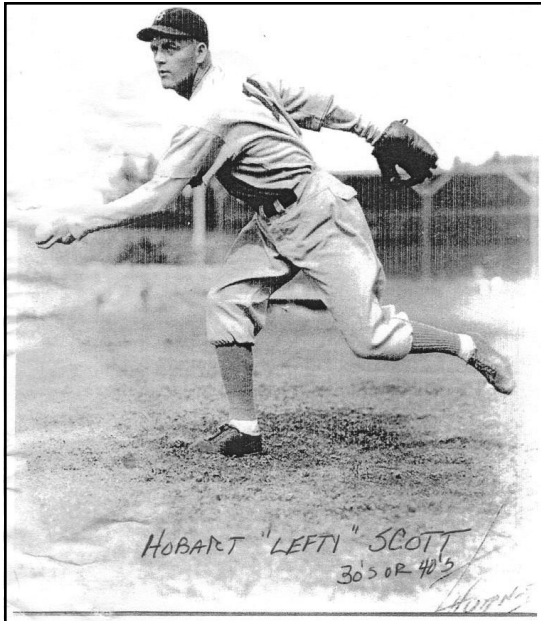
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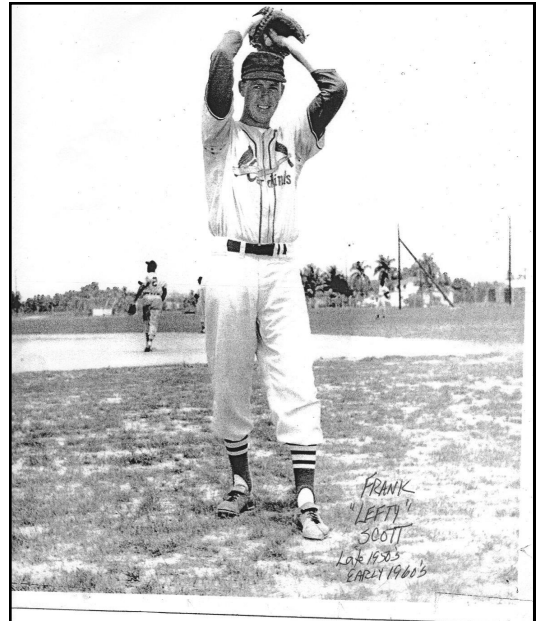
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Let us hear from you with your stories, articles and pictures!!



HOBART SCOTT—"Lefty" in the 20s, 30s, 40s



FRANK SCOTT—"Lefty" in the 50s and 60s.

Uncle Hobart and Nephew Frank Scott were two of the best and most successful pitchers to come from the coalfields of Virginia. Hobart pitched for Knoxville in "A" ball for two years and then played many other seasons in the Appalachian League. He also pitched in professional leagues not sanctioned by Professional Baseball. Frank pitched in the Cardinals organization for 3 years. Due to his overall record and his 11-7 record and 3.29 E.R.A. in his last year, Frank could certainly have played on and possibly in the majors had he chosen to pursue that dream. Both Hobart and Frank are testaments to the caliber of baseball players brought up from St. Charles and Lee County.

The Lee County Legend recognizes two outstanding Lee County athletes for achievements this month!

TYLER GRAHAM

488 yards rushing and 6 touchdowns in a single football game for Lee High, Oct 2011.

STEVE MARSEE

Inducted into Virginia Sports Hall of Fame on Oct. 17, 2011

The Rules of the Game

There were twenty formal rules of baseball included in the first rules in 1845. In the last issue of the *Lee County Legend* the first six were published. Following are the other fourteen rules.

THE BEGINNING (PART TWO)

7. If members appear after the game is commenced, they may be chosen if mutually agreed upon.
8. The game to consist of twenty-one counts, or aces; but at the conclusion an equal number of hands must be played.
9. The ball must be pitched, not thrown, for the bat.
10. A ball knocked out of the field, or outside of the range of the first and third base, is foul.
11. Three balls being struck at and missed and the last one caught, is a hand-out; if not caught is considered fair, and the striker bound to run.
12. If a ball be struck, or tipped, and caught, either flying or on the first bound, it is a hand out.
13. A player running the bases shall be out, if the ball is in the hands of an adversary on the base, or the runner is touched with it before he makes his base; it being understood, however, that in no instance is a ball to be thrown at him.
14. A player running who shall prevent an adversary from catching or getting the ball before making his base, is a hand out.
15. Three hands out, all out.
16. Players must take their strike in regular turn.
17. All disputes and differences relative to the game, to be decided by the Umpire, from which there is no appeal.
18. No ace or base can be made on a foul strike.
19. A runner cannot be put out in making one base, when a balk is made on the pitcher.
20. But one base allowed when a ball bounds out of the field when struck.

From these very basic rules of 1845 the evolution of baseball rules has been a continual process. The modifications of these rules is a fascinating story that we will tell in future issues.

BUFORD RHEA-Among the best! By Dave Audia

Although Pennington's Buford Rhea did not have a long professional career. He was an outstanding baseball player. With Asheville in the "B" SALLY League in 1927, Buford played a partial season of 15 games and hit .327. He also was well know for his running speed. One thing for sure, in this year at Asheville, Buford proved that he could play along side high level players. Seven of his teammates had either already played in the majors or were on their way there. Harry Wilke played in the majors one year, Duck Sedgewick-2, Harry Smythe-3, Gary Fortune-4, Denny Smothers-5, Billy Harris-7 and Larry Gardner-17 years. Harris played along side Paul and Lloyd Waner with the Pirates. And most impressively, Larry Gardner played infield for Boston from 1908-1917. He played 3b when Babe Ruth was going 18-8, 23-12 and 24-13 on the mound.

My point is this—Lee County players have played well against outside competition and many times very well. I believe it is very admirable to play well against the very best players. Though Buford may not have been the best player ever to grace a baseball team, at least we can say, "He was amongst them"!

"I REMEMBER.....

Editors note: We are pleased to hear from our readers. We hope all of you will enjoy reading the expressions of their memories of sports history in Lee County.

From: Max Chance - longest tenured coach in Flatwoods HS history, 1972-1990

Dear LCL,

After reading your publication, I would like to relate a few of the memories I have of Lee County Sports.

I played basketball and baseball at Flatwoods for Coach Fugate Reasor, who was also the principal. We players loved and respected Coach Reasor who had a long career coaching at Flatwoods, Keokee, Appalachia and Twin Springs. (Fugate Reasor was an outstanding athlete and Lonesome Pine League baseball player, too.)

At Flatwoods, with me playing right field, we defeated Keokee to win the Lee County Baseball Championship in 1943. One of the best players was Ben Bowen who created a lot of interest by the Brooklyn Dodgers. I recall that Branch Rickey sent his brother Frank to visit. He spent the night with the Bowens, trying to talk Ben's mother into letting Ben sign. She refused due to the death of Ben's father in the war. Ben himself got drafted into the Army. He later played for Harlan in the professional Mountain States League. Though Ben had a very respectable record, he gave up his baseball career to marry a girl whose father owned several coal mines.

I know about many other good athletes of that era from Lee County. **JB Meyers**, Ben Bowen's uncle, played at LMU. **Frank Hensey**, from Keokee, a baseball slugger, led a semi-pro league in Oklahoma in home runs for the season. He coach at Pennington High. **Bob Combs**, fought in WWI and played baseball at William and Mary. **Ralph Tyler**, also played at William and Mary, and coached at Flatwoods and Jonesville.

In the 40s, **Pete Chance (my brother)**, **Doc Grover Tyler**, and **Junior Russell** of Flatwoods, **Fred Frank Stickley** of Rose Hill High and **Joe Robinson** of Ewing High played baseball at Hiwassee College. **Freda Fletcher** of Flatwoods, played basketball at Hiwassee.

In the 30s, **Olin Jack Stickley** played football at Emory and Henry. He was a drop kicker who earned many all conference and state awards. His picture and awards are displayed along with his school Hall of Fame awards.

During my coaching at Flatwoods from 1972-1990, I had many great athletes. I would like to recognize some. **Dennis Speak** averaged close to 30 points for me in 1972. He and **Charlie Gibbons** were offered scholarships at UVA-Wise. **Rick Presley**, who was the most complete player I ever coached, played for Carson Newman. **Mike Collins**, 6'7" center scored around 2200 points playing for Flatwoods for 3 years and, due to consolidation, played his senior year at Thomas Walker. **Ronnie Horton** holds 4 scoring records for the Lee County Christmas Tourney, including most points in a game and most total points. **Paul Gilliam**, at 5'6" averaged near 20 points, was an outstanding assist man and defensive player. I had many other fine athletes, a great career and, most of all, many fond memories at Flatwoods.

The Lee County Legend
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TO:

KEEPING THE MEMORIES ALIVE