



The CCHS Newsletter

Carroll County Historical Society

P. O. Box 1308

Carrollton, GA 30112

OCTOBER 2012

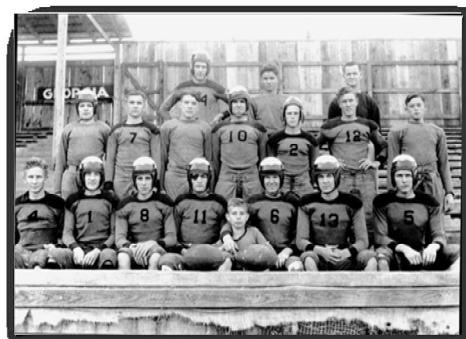
*Carroll County Historical Society's Meeting
Thursday October 4th, 6:30 pm
Hall of Fame Room
Whitley Morris Field House— 2nd Floor*

Trojan Legends & Legacy
The history of Carrollton high school athletics
through the decades



with Rita Gentry

Surrounded by displays of Trojan sports, Rita will help us relive the thrilling history of Carrollton High School Sports. **Don't Miss it!**





Whitlow Wyatt

By Ben L. Moon

Up near Buchanan in Haralson County lived a quiet baseball legend that few younger folks in West Georgia even knew. Whitlow Wyatt was one of the best pitchers in the National League from 1939 to 1943, compiling a record of seventy-eight wins and thirty-nine losses. He was named to the National League All-Star Team four times and is a member of the Brooklyn Dodgers Hall of Fame and the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame.

My son-in-law, Brian, served as my baseball translator on that day in the late 1990s when he and I visited with Wyatt, hearing memories of his glory days. He signed baseballs for both of us "along the sweet spot" near a seam; if hit at that point, he explained, the ball would go farthest. Wyatt, born in Kensington, GA in Walker County, was an outstanding pitcher even in high school, striking out 23 college hitters. He attended Georgia Tech in 1927 (as a

football player) and was signed by the Detroit Tigers in 1929, then went to the Chicago White Sox, Cleveland Indians, Brooklyn Dodgers, and Philadelphia Phillies. He was purchased by the Dodgers after an MVP season in 1938.

Wyatt's best season was 1941, when he tied for the league lead in victories (22), and led the Dodgers to their first pennant since 1920. He won the second game of the World Series, ending the New York Yankees' streak of ten consecutive victories in series play. He lost the fifth and final game of the series, but he struck out Joe DiMaggio twice, the only time that DiMaggio fanned twice in the same game all season.

He also pitched well in 1942, winning 19 games and leading the Dodgers in wins again. During his most productive period, 1940–1943, Wyatt went 70–36 and led the league in shutouts twice. "I didn't pitch hard for the money," he recalls. "I pitched hard because, by gosh, it's just embarrassing to get beat. I didn't like those boos, and I heard a few of them too." And yet he was not an absurdly overpaid sports figure like those of present day; he simply shook his head in amazement at the salaries major league baseball players get today. His highest salary was \$18,000 back in the early 1950s. "I didn't play for the money, although I needed the money. I really enjoyed playing."

Wyatt pitched to the best, including Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig. Of Gehrig he says "Lord-a-mercy, I'll tell you, he could swing that bat...he was tougher to pitch to than Ruth was, really." Of Hank Aaron, he recalled that "he had real quick wrists...that action was probably quicker than any hitter I saw." Of Bob Feller, he says "Feller had the best stuff of any pitcher in the majors."

In a 16-season career, Wyatt posted a 106–95 record with 872 strikeouts and a 3.79 ERA in 1,761 innings pitched, including 17 shutouts and 97 complete games. In the early 1950s he coached the Atlanta Crackers in the Dixie League and led them to the league pennant. He finished up his professional career as the Atlanta Braves' first pitching coach; retired West Georgia College coach and former Brave Archie White remembers him well. From 1955 to 1969 Wyatt was pitching coach for the Philadelphia Phillies and the Milwaukee Braves, following the Braves to Atlanta. He taught his young hurlers the importance of changing speeds, earning recognition as one of baseball's best pitching coaches. While with the Braves, "Whit" became good friends with owner Ted Turner, selling him a portion of his 700-acre farm in Haralson County.

Off the field Wyatt was a humble man, devoted to his family, farm and faith; he became one of the leading Christian inspirational speakers in Georgia. He died at Tanner Medical Center in Carrollton on July 16, 1999 of complications from pneumonia.

SANDY FLAT BAPTIST CHURCH CELEBRATES 100TH ANNIVERSARY

Over the beautiful September weekend of the 15th and 16th, Sandy Flat Baptist Church near the Alabama line southwest of Bowdon celebrated its centennial. On September 16th, 1912, according to the original church minutes, a small group of neighbors and friends met to constitute the church and call its first minister, Rev. David Warner Kite.

Preacher Kite, as he is called to this day, was a young soldier in the War Between the States when he promised God that if he ever got back to Cleburne County, he would become a minister of the Gospel. He kept his promise and served faithfully in that region of Alabama and Georgia until his death in 1922.

Among Sandy Flat's first families were Jackson, Smith, Ayers, Hosey, and Johnson. These families and others met each month in the one-roomed Sandy Flat School until a frame church could be built the following year. That frame building still stands underneath a brick renovation. Through many hardships and joys the church has faithfully served Christ by serving the community and each other. Today pastor Brian Smith continues the simple and basic traditions of preaching Christ and teaching the Bible.

On Saturday afternoon, Harold and Janice Ivester hosted an open house in the 1870 log cabin built by Preacher Kite on his return from the war. On Sunday morning a special celebration service recognized former pastor, Jimmy Parmer and the church's oldest member at ninety-two, Mrs. Woodrow (Sybil Smith) Jackson. Sandy Flat Baptist Church is noted for its singing, and music played an important part in the celebration, with choir and congregational singing, and bluegrass gospel music brought by Jack and Carolyn Crews, Johnny and Phylus Jackson. Lindsey Eidson presented the highlights of the church's history, and Janice Ivester told personal stories of her family's connection with the church through the years. Many wore styles of the period. Dinner-on-the-ground has been replaced by Dinner-in-the-fellowship-hall, but the food provided by the church ladies has never been excelled.



Former Pastor Jimmy Parmer



Sandy Flat Baptist Church-Early Photo



Wayne Ayers and Pastor Brian Smith



Phylus & Johnny Jackson; Carolyn & Jack Crews



Oldest Member Sybil Jackson



Janice Ivester & Lindsey Eidson



Joe McGinnis, Ben Moon, and Dr. Mel Steely enjoy a lively discussion following Ben's program on the history of Tanner Medical Center. The program featured both audio and video clips of the doctors and benefactors responsible for Tanner's success.



Dr. Jack Crews shares some personal experiences from his half-century in Carrollton medicine with Ben Moon after the meeting. Almost everyone attending had a chance to share stories and remembrances of early Tanner doctors.

A Message from President Mel Steely

Fall is in the air and it is time for the mass of history lovers to return to the regular CCHS monthly meetings. October's meeting will feature Rita Gentry discussing the sports history of Carrollton High School with her show and tell presentation. She has collected everything from old photos, posters, and trophies to dirty sweat socks and jock straps. We hope you'll come to hear her on October 4th at 6:30 in the Hall of Fame Room on the second floor of the Whitley Morris Field House on the Carrollton High School campus.

We will also present the new proposed slate of officers for the 2012-2013 year and vote on them.

CCHS BOARD MEMBERS FOR 2012

President	Mel Steely
Vice President	Joe McGinnis
Secretary	Rebecca Fordyce
Treasurer	Meredith Barr
Membership	Susan Vandiver
Newsletter	Janice Ivester
Programs	Doug Mabry
Archives	Gwyn Chesnut
Nominating	Martha Stapler

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