

Mount Vernon Signal

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Second Section

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Friday Night is “End of an Era” for basketball at MVHS

(Reprinted from Mt. Vernon Signal, February 24, 1972)
The following article was printed during the last year of Mt. Vernon School as a high school. The information was provided by Ethel Chesnut Owens, former school librarian. David Owens the editor has added some information. This article is part of the forth coming book; Before Consolidation-The Golden Age of Rockcastle County Basketball.

The end of basketball for Mt. Vernon High School will come this Friday night when the Red Devils take on Williamsburg High School. It will also mark the end of a twenty-five year tenure of Jack Laswell as coach at Mt. Vernon High School. This is the longest career in Rockcastle history and one of the longest in Kentucky High School Basketball at one school.

Basketball really started at Mt. Vernon with the completion of the present high school building in the fall of 1927, and the first basketball team to play in the local gym was a good one, the 1927-28 team with a regular season record of 16-2 and a final mark of 22-3. This team, which won the 26th District, was composed of Robert Sparks, Other Hamlin, Ballard Clark, Carl Davis, Victor Hysinger, and Bill Cox and was coached by Jack Garrett. This team lost to the famous Carr Creek team 22 to 17 in the regional final at Richmond.

In 1930, Mt. Vernon High School won their second 26th district title, Marvin Fairchild was coach. On his team were

Bill Cox, Pete Sowder, Oscar Hayes, Stack Baker, and Bobby Oldham. The best team of the 1930s was probably the 1932 26th District champion team coached by Charlie Perkins. They went to the regional tournament played at Eastern Kentucky Teacher's College at Richmond where they lost in the championship game 35 to 26 to Waco High School. Starting group for this team was Stack Baker, Carl Baker, Oscar Fain, Bobby Oldham, Jim Hansel, Vernon Clark, and Charlie Hines. Another Mt. Vernon team of mention would be Coach Bill Landrum's 1935 50th District champions. They defeated Annville 27 to 20 in the finals. At the regional, played at Union College, they defeated Middlesboro 34 to 22 in the first round and in a rematch lost to Annville 26 to 20 in the region semi-finals. Annville went on to win the 13th region championship beating high powered Barbourville.

Bill Landrum, now an assistant principal at Mt. Vernon, coached from 1934-35 to 1941-42 and his 1940-41 team was outstanding until riddled by sickness and injuries just before tournament time. Despite those setbacks they managed to win the 46th district only to lose by seven points in the semi-finals of the region to defending state champion Hazel Green, a team they had beaten during the regular season. On this team were: Med Noe, Totise Noe, Jim Davis, Buddy Childress, Jim Cox, Curtis Harmon, Robert Harmon, Opp Bussell, and Millard Tallent. Jack Laswell

played at Mt. Vernon during the Landrum era and was Mt. Vernon's all time scorer until his mark was passed by Earl Noe in 1954 and Noe's mark in 1956 by Ken Cornelius. Laswell went on to star at Union College making All-Conference twice.

From 1942-43 to 1945-46 the Red Devils were coached by Albert Albright. The 1945-46 team won the district over Stanford on their home floor and lost in the regional at Lancaster to Hazel Green 38-34. Members of the team were Billy Kirby, Keith Arnold, Jack Bullock, Douglas Woodall, Millard Tallant, and Buddy Childress.

Coach Jack Laswell came in at the start of the 1946-47 season and it was during the 1950s that Mt. Vernon had outstanding teams, especially during the Earl Noe and Ken Cornelius years. During this period, the Red Devils went to the regional tournament six straight years.

The team that was the pride and joy of Mt. Vernon and Rockcastle County was the only team to ever represent Mt. Vernon in the state tournament, the team of 1953 composed of: All-State center Earl Noe, Charles Baker, Charles Shepherd, Manuel Shepherd, Earl Pittman, and a freshman starter Kenneth Cornelius. Cornelius was selected four straight years as an All-Regional player and in 1955 and 1956 as an All-State player. He was also selected to play in the 1956 East West Kentucky All-State Classic.

The 1953 team won the right to go to the state tour-

nament by defeating the region favorite, Lily High School, 77-66. In the state tournament, the Red Devils played a great game against the number three ranked team in the state, Newport Catholic, but lost in overtime. Earl Noe scored 39 points in the game, a tournament record at the time, and made the All-Tournament team. Newport went

on to the semi-finals.

Coach Laswell feels that the 1956 team was one of the best to ever play for Mt. Vernon. After winning the district, in the regional they defeated the two favorites but were themselves upset in the finals by former Brodhead Coach Joe Harper's Monticello team. That team which was the first Rockcastle team to

rank in the state's top ten was composed of Ken Cornelius, Billy Gregory, Billy Chaney, John Dale Helton, Keith Kincer, Billy J. Hanel, and Bobby Sigmon. This team defeated the number one team in the state that year when they beat Berea High School twice in the regular season.

(Cont. to pg. B3)



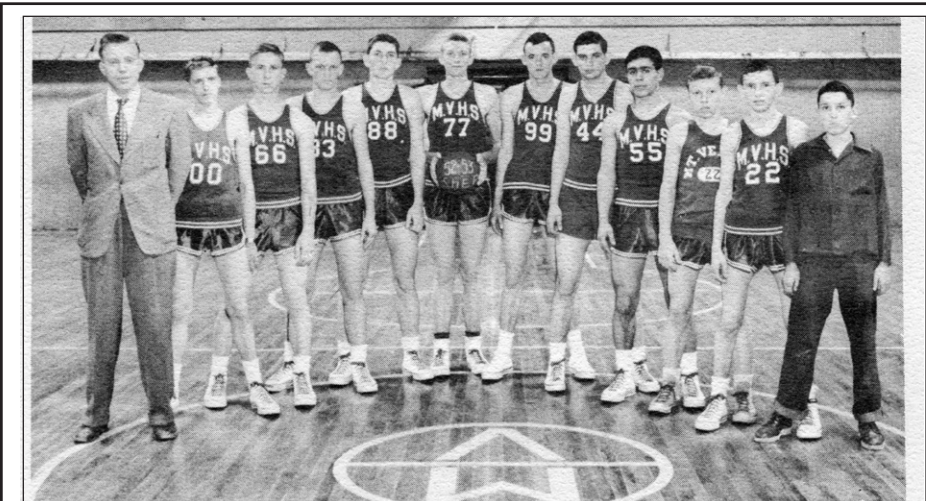
The last Red Devil team. The 1971-72 Red Devils were front from left: Casey Carroll, Johnny Boone Saylor, Jerry Hackworth, Randy Miller and Lynn Parsons. Back row from left: Denis Payne, Jim Mullins, Paul Travis, Lyndon Smith, Mark Bray, Troy McClure and Glen Brown.



Anna Belle Stewart Gymnasium, home of the Red Devils.



The 1946 District Champion Mt. Vernon Red Devils. Billy Kirby is shown 7th from left in back row. Can anyone identify the other players?



The Team of '52-'53
Coach Laswell, Taylor, Baker, M. Shepherd, Kelly, C. Shepherd, Noe, Deatherage, Pittman, Jasper, Cornelius, Manager McFerron.
The 1953 District and Region Champion Mt. Vernon Red Devils.



The 1932 District Champion and Region Runner-Up Mt. Vernon Red Devils. Charlie Hines is shown 3rd row 6th from the left. Can anyone identify the other players?

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