

# EARLY 'TOWN TEAMS'



**1900 TEAM - [Back Row, left to right] George Gushard, Ralph McMeen, George Jacobs, Charles Noble, William Stutts, Carl Brindle. 2nd. row - Charles Goodale, Lloyd Arbogast, George Mayer (holding ball), William Burchfield, William Patterson. 3rd. row - Martin Fasick, Eshleman, Beverly Mayer, Guy Auker. Mascot - Louis Bousum's bull dog. Picture loaned by Jane Auker Goshen.**

When was the first football game played in Juniata County? No one seems to know. Actual beginnings are lost in the mists of antiquity and there almost certainly were teams before records were chronicled and before newspapers began taking notice of such events. Harrisburg's first recorded team was in 1887. Pottsville had a team in 1889. Following is our earliest evidence of football here in Mifflintown.

**FOOTBALL — CIRCA — 1895-1900  
MIFFLINTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA**

*[As told to Mr. Ken Lehman by Mrs. Lucy Lehman's  
Uncle - George L. Mayer in 1946]:*



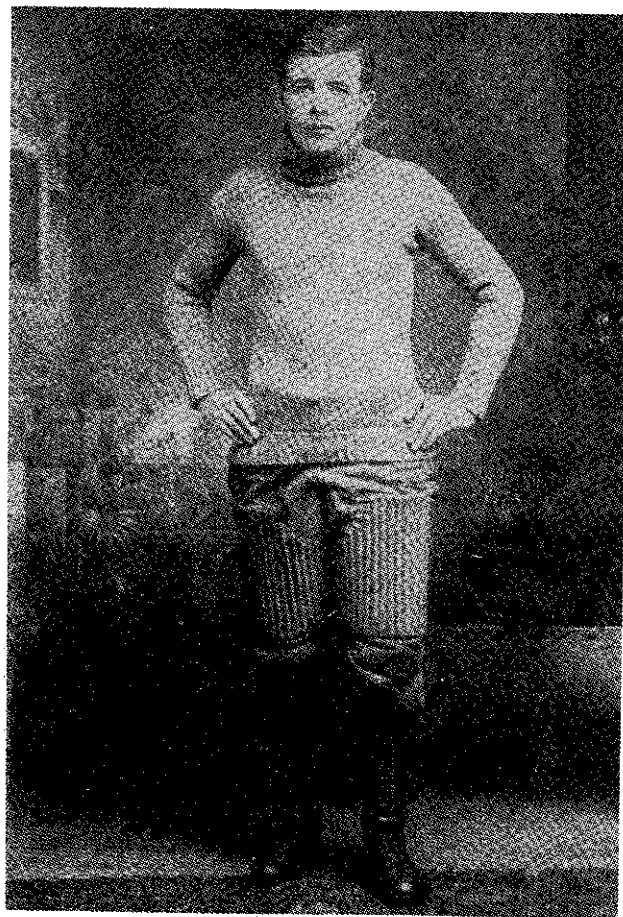
**GEORGE L. MAYER**  
1898

The Mifflintown football games were played along the old canal adjacent to the Juniata River below where the former Potter's Bus Garage was located. All games were played on Saturday afternoons.

By today's standards, the uniforms were rather crude and not very protective. There were no helmets, face guards or extra padding. The uniforms consisted of a heavy pair of pants and a vest or heavy sweater.

During this era of football, there was no forward pass, since it hadn't been invented. The largest and heaviest players usually would align at the line of scrimmage; the lightest and fastest man on the team was usually the ball carrier. After receiving the ball from the center, the ballcarrier would run forward, step on the backs of the larger men up front and take a mighty leap forward. The forward extent of his leap was usually the net yardage gained on each play.

Usually there were no substitutions during the entire game, and there were many sprains and bad bruises during a Saturday afternoon game at Mifflintown.



**J. ROY 'PETE' BERGEY**

15 Taylor Street  
Berryville, Virginia 22611

Dear Mr. Klingensmith,

In reply to your letter of February 28, 1878 addressed to me re: football in the Mifflintown and adjacent areas just after the turn of the century, ie, 1902 through 1909.

I graduated from Mifflintown High School in 1904. Because of lack of enough boys, high school football was not known at that time. So, therefore we young men were forced to play on Independent teams and A. C. teams in the area.

I recall playing at 14 years of age with much older fellows such as, Charlie Noble, a very great fullback at that time and who later became a Plumbing Contractor on Electric Ave. in Lewistown.

Of course, at that time great rivalry existed between the two boroughs, Patterson and Mifflintown. When we were forced to play teams away from home, such as, Lewistown and Burnham and Yeagertown we would merge the two teams as one team representing Mifflintown. Enclosed please find a picture of this team at approximately the year 1907.



THE 1907 TEAM included: [R.E.] Graham, [R.T.] Stoner, [R.G.] Shimp, [C.] Nestler, [L.G.] Auman, [L.T.] Coder, [L.E.] Cramer, [Qt.] J. Fasick, [R.H.B.] McDonald, [L.H.B.] C. Fasick, [F.B.] Roy Bergey and Manager Suloff.

I would like to say that Davey Coder was as tough a little football player that came out of Patterson Borough at that time.

As for myself on this team I did most of the ball carrying, all the kicking and what little passing the rules permitted. Frankly, I got my biggest thrills on defense by meeting a man head on, although I received most of my publicity with my ball carrying.

In 1906 I enrolled at the Burchfield Academy in Lewistown which was located at the so called "Five Points" where Headings Drug Store stood for many years. We played such

teams as Altoona, Harrisburg School, New Bloomfield Academy, Newport A. C., etc. I recall Altoona beating us 10-5 [note that touchdowns were worth only five points at that time and field goals via drop-kicks were worth three points as of today]. I also remember us beating Harrisburg 10-0.

After playing several years of this type football I was offered an athletic scholarship at Franklin and Marshall College. But in the meantime I contracted Diphtheria and this practically ended my football career.

May I take this opportunity to thank you for contacting me and hope I have given you some helpful information. I know at my age I have forgotten many people who should have been mentioned but I am sorry for any omissions or errors.

Hoping good old Juniata Joint can have many successful seasons ahead. I never missed a home game until we moved to Virginia seven years ago.

Sincerely,  
J. Roy [Pete] Bergey

#### MIFFLINTOWN TOWN-TEAM FOOTBALL CIRCA — 1915-1920

[As told to Mrs. Florence Stump  
by her Uncle - Alex Vincent]

In the mid-teens "Town Teams" were in existence along with the high school teams. Their games were played on the hill where the high school is presently located. Lewistown, Yeagertown, and Burnham were regular opponents.

Saturdays were the game days, and they were usually played before enormous crowds. There was no place to sit, just standing around the sidelines.

Before the field up on the hill, they played on a field near where the Lyons Fashion Factory is now located on Front and Cedar Streets. The play was very rough, each team would form a solid wall and push each other. Many got hurt. Finally, this method was prohibited and the playing became a little more open.

At the town team games there was high excitement, lots of fights, even riots - drinking, and jailing of some of the participants. I helped officiate at many of these town-team games after I was out of high school.

## MIFFLIN AND MIFFLINTOWN FOOTBALL — 1908 - 1916

Mifflintown High School played football under that name as early as 1908, meeting such teams as New Bloomfield Academy, Lewistown Academy, Milroy A. C., and Yeagertown 'Y'. During this era there were usually as many non-students [Ringers] as students playing on some of the teams.

Following are some quotes from those who were there:

"There was never a perfect field, you played where there was room."

"Played in 1911 where the Weiss Store is presently located."

"One of the fields the Mifflin team played upon was across from what is presently the Casner Chevron Station."

"There were no hash markers on the field - you played wherever the ball was downed."

"Usually had only one referee."

"Protective equipment worn if any usually consisted of quilted pants or pants with reeds inserted in the lining in front of the upper legs; vests made of canvas; and on occasion, a rubber nose guard worn sometimes with a mouthpiece attached."

"We tackled at the ankles instead of the waist."

"A popular offensive maneuver was the flying wedge formation in which the ballcarrier ran inside of a 'V'-Wedge made up of his teammates."

"Around 1915 - 1916, some of the players I can remember at Mifflin High School were: P. M. McFadden, D. Burchfield, D. Rowe, D. Mitchell, L. Conner, C. Duncan, T. Crawford, and G. Klinger. The field these years was three blocks from the Mifflin School out in the direction of Licking Creek."

"A fellow by the name of Covert was the coach at Mifflin for a few years. He worked over at the Hawstone Refractory. His duties consisted mainly of recruiting for the team."

## MIFFLINTOWN HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL — 1915 AND 1916

*[As told to Mrs. Florence Stump  
by her Uncle - Alex Vincent]*

In the years 1915 and 1916, Mifflintown High School Team members were: Clark "Pickle" McNeal, Warren Bachman [fullback], Leon Kaiser [later played at Gettysburg College], Charles "Maggie" Magill, Ben Sch-

weyer, Jack Kyle, Howe Crawford, and myself [I played Quarterback, but could not run very fast because of a bad leg from polio].

Fred Rocky, Assistant Principal was our coach, although we didn't call him coach in those days. We played the high school games on the baseball field where Schweyer Avenue and Seventh Streets meet. Rocky taught the fellows to pass, handle the ball, run, block, etc. from what he learned playing football at Bucknell.

We played against Mifflin, our big rival. Other teams were usually "pick-up" teams, with about four or five games a season. We wore shin guards from knees to ankles, old clothes, no helmets or shoulder pads. The school players used to practice in "Green Lane", the alley up from the old school building next to the cemetery. There was no school athletic organization at all, the fellows who liked to play, and the teacher who liked and knew the game, got together and played.

## MIFFLIN AND MIFFLINTOWN HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL — 1917 - 1919

Following are some quotes from those who were there:

"There were no football teams in 1917 and 1918 at neither Mifflin nor Mifflintown High Schools due to World War I."

"In 1919 neither Mifflin High School nor Mifflintown High School had enough football player, so Professor Weimer, the Principal of Mifflintown, and Ms. Carolyn Gardner, the Mifflin Principal, decided to combine the teams for that year. Some of the players were: L. Stutts [End], W. Kelly [End], J. Roush [End], H. Zook [Tackle], J. Ellis [Guard], G. Bender [Guard], C. Eichman [Tackle], F. Wright [Halfback], Harold "Peck" Kepler [Halfback], C. Swarts [Fullback], D. Roush [Fullback], Kennedy [Quarterback]."

"We played Lewistown this year in a sea of mud. Harry Swartz, our fullback, used a horse collar for his hip pads and after the game his cardboard suitcase was so heavy with his wet equipment that when he picked it up, all he got was the handle."

"We played Lewistown again in 1919 as a return match being part of the Armistice Day Celebration. The game ended a 12 - 12 tie on the field where the present Fermanagh Elementary School is situated."

In 1927, Mifflin and Mifflintown High Schools officially combined as one under the name of Mifflintown High School.

306 Hope  
Providence, RI 02906  
Aug. 17, 1982

Dear Coach Klingensmith

I received a copy of 'Fall Frenzy' from my niece, Dorothy Mark, and I enjoyed rambling through it as it brought back many memories. I was especially happy to see our old Coach 'Doc' Doty get some recognition. You probably are not aware that he gave his services gratis and had not much material - bodies or equipment to work with.

There are several things that I would like to call your attention to and I'm sorry that someone did not make you aware of them. In the late teens our Leon Kaiser was a great end with Gettysburg College and I can recall that he and two brothers, Emmanuel boys from Altoona, got rave notices in the Sunday issue of the Philadelphia Inquirer following a football game with the University of Penna. Leon also was a fine, fine baseball player.

In 1922, I was quarterback on a M. H. S. team that included among others E. Roush, Earle Hower, John Shively, Razz Louder, Penrose Rosemund (a mute), Bob Broadbent, Lee Ellis and Ratty Fasick. Ratty was a left halfback and while I am aware that as we grow older the past events seem greater, I can still say that he was one, of perhaps five, great backs from Mifflintown. I'm certain that if you check with John Shively he will tell you that Ratty was exceptional. In a game against Huntingdon we were by all measures to be badly outclassed so much so that our principal, J. Freeman Melroy, told us that he did not think that we should go up to Huntingdon with the idea of winning; to which John Shively replied, "We always expect to win," or words to that effect. Huntingdon, to date that year, was unbeaten, untied and unscored upon. On our first two possessions Ratty carried for two touchdowns - they were long runs but I can't say how long. At half time I think we had them 14 - 0 but of course they poured it on in the second half and we lost - perhaps 24 - 14 or some such score.

Ratty's life story is very interesting and sad also. He was taken by Bernal Weimer, who had left Mifflintown H. S. to lead the Biology Dept. of Bethany W. Va. College and in Ratty's first game on the freshman team he had an ankle broken - badly broken. That ended his football career, but he graduated from Bethany, became a teacher in W. Va. and left a great imprint on high school football circles in that state. This is a long, drawn out dissertation but I couldn't pass up the opportunity to tell you of these two people and to put a plug in for Doc. Ratty died in 1980 of acute leukemia.

Sincerely,  
George Bachman

### KNOWN SCORES OF MIFFLIN HIGH SCHOOL TEAMS:

NOTE: All 'early -years' scores were taken from the files of Professor Roger Saylor of Penn State, who recorded only games played versus other schools and not versus clubs.

| <u>Mifflin</u> |                                           | <u>Opponent</u> |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------------|
|                | 1911                                      |                 |
| 0              | Carson Long                               | 6               |
| 0              | Carson Long                               | 25              |
|                | 1912                                      |                 |
| 0              | Mifflintown                               | 7               |
|                | 1919 • In Combination<br>with Mifflintown |                 |
| 0              | Lewistown                                 | 25              |
| 12             | Lewistown                                 | 12              |
|                | 1920                                      |                 |
| 0              | Lewistown                                 | 37              |
| 0              | Mt. Union                                 | 41              |

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| <u>Mifflintown</u> |                                       | <u>Opponent</u> |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
|                    | 1914                                  |                 |
| 7                  | Mifflin                               | 0               |
| 14                 | Lewistown "Y"                         | 19              |
|                    | 1915                                  |                 |
| 0                  | Lewistown                             | 10              |
|                    | 1919 • In Combination<br>with Mifflin |                 |
| 0                  | Lewistown                             | 25              |
| 12                 | Lewistown                             | 12              |
|                    | 1920 - Doty:                          |                 |
| 0                  | Sunbury 38                            |                 |
| 0                  | Mt. Union                             | 33              |
| 7                  | Yeagertown                            | 12              |
|                    | 1921 - Doty                           |                 |
| 3                  | Marysville                            | 0               |
| 0                  | Lewistown                             | 0               |
| 7                  | Lewistown                             | 27              |