A New Champion

The city of Dayton which lies in the heart of the great Miami Valley is described by one buckeye historian as the city where rivers meet.

It is a fitting location because man has long addressed his survival to the influence of rivers-the Nile, the Tigris and Euphrates, the Hwang Ho, the Ganges, the Danube and the Volga-to say little of the Mississippi, the Missouri, the Red, the Ohio and many, many others.

Among the rivers in our midst is mad River, but it is mad in name only. With this you will agree if you but follow it from its source to its mouth. In 1789 at the mouth of the stream three American pioneers;-Maj. Benjamin Stites, John Stites Gano and William Goforth formed plans for a settlement to be named Venice at the mouth of the Tiber. That was the original name of our mad River.

What is now Dayton Ohio was then but a heavy wilderness, rich in resources beyond measure. A short distance from the mouth of mad River were the lodges of the Shawnee’s, those Spartans of the middle West. They with the Miami’s, the Delawares, the Wyandots and Senecas looked upon this domain as their Eldorado and fight they would ere being pushed to the South Sea.

Because of these Indian troubles and John Cleves Symme’s misunderstanding with the federal government Venice on the Tiber was not established in 1789-hence our narrow escape from the title, Venetians. But Mad Anthony Wayne made the section safe when he won at the battle of Fallen Timbers and thereafter concluded the Treaty of Greenville August 3, 1795.

Now all is quiet on the River Mad-and soon became the founding of Dayton, Ohio a name given in honor of Jonathan Dayton of Elizabethtown, New Jersey-a man quite prominent during revolutionary and post a revolutionary times.

North and North East of mad River mouth lay a thickly wooded section, so thick that pioneers passed through by the blazed trail. Today we called this progressive part of our city north Dayton.

But long before this became the accepted name parts of it were called Rosedale and Texas. One can readily understand why the name Rosedale but Texas does seem a bit odd. Perhaps it came about because North Dayton was the center for the sale of Texas ponies for many years at Federer’s Stables on what is now Keowee Street.

Youngsters of North Dayton in this fairly remote day busied themselves at recreation by trapping the muskrat at the old channel where Phillips swimming pool now stands or busied themselves by fishing in the waters of the Miami, or by playing town-ball on one of the many commons. The old covered bridge over the river was a refuge and a rendezvous and a place where many initials were carved on the precious Timbers with a Barlow knife, the prized possession of every lad. A stones throw from the old covered bridge was the Gypsy settlement of the Stanley’s where King sugar held sway. Happy indeed worth their evenings around the campfire at storytelling time and soothing indeed was the music from their guitars-tunes which sent even there many hours to a night of sweet repose. Seems somewhat sad that Romany’s day has passed.

North Dayton grew rapidly. District schools came with their names ultimately changed to Alan and Webster. High school youngsters went to Steele and Stivers for years until the building of Kiser high school about 20 years ago.

Great men have no need that we praise them. The urge on us is to know them. And so it is with Daniel Kiser after whom Kaiser high school is named.

Daniel Kiser was one of the outstanding pioneers in the early history of Dayton and it is well to pay tribute to his memory. Daniel Kiser, long successful in business gave much of his time and much of his money in order that North Dayton might develop and prosper. Hence it is little wonder that the Dayton board of education called the new high school-Kiser high school.

Kiser high school had had but brief experience on the football field when in 1934 she fought her way to her first city football championship. It seemed that the only school blocking her pathway to the scholastic football throne was Stivers who long had enjoyed a nationwide prestige.

Which was the better tea, must be decided November 10, 1934 at Athletic Field. It is doubtful if any Dayton high school ever had a better balanced team than the team which represented Kiser high school 18 years ago. Gaylor and Harter were at ends. Quast and Zacheritz were at tackles. Paul Bryan was at center. Reeder, Joe Bryan, Gulas and Lee were in the backfield with Guy and Kremsavia to assist.

The orange and black of Stivers also had a stellar combination that year. Dausch and Eisen were at tackles; Glotfelter and Schreiber were at guards; Schear was at center; Carter, Jones, Shafer, Newbrand and Kettler were in the backfield. And at ends were Lacy and Lee Fenner Jr. Dayton has produced many football stars but the Fenner athletes are comparable to the Nesser brothers of Columbus Ohio-men who played many years on the Columbus Panhandles. Lee Fenner’s father played an all city end at Stivers in 1914-1915-1916 and for 15 years he played at that position for the Dayton triangles.

Eldon Fenner was end on Stivers in 1922 and 1923 and now here was Lee Junior to do his part in the sensational game of 1934. And in a few years Stivers will undoubtedly have his two sons Benny and Young Lee Fenner at the old position of end. Probably it is the spirit of the Cherokee which makes the family so football minded.

But let us return to the charges of coaches Dave Lee and Horace English. The officials Bud Wettig, Walter Mattis and Eddie Sauer walked to the center of the field to give instructions to the captains-Dale Glotfelter of Stivers and Ray Reeder of Kiser. 5000 partisans jammed the stands at Athletic Field. The bands had played and marched but now all was attention as the coin was tossed high into the air.

Kiser won the toss and elected to receive and away went a new pigskin to Ray Reeder. And now began a most powerful offense both afoot and in the air. The Panthers plunged, passed and ran until they reached the Stivers 35 yard line. Now the Tigers dug in as never before and Kiser was held. The Tigers punted to put the Panthers on the march again deep into Stivers territory. Again the orange and black held like a stone wall and Lee Fenner booted the ball to midfield. Both teams were playing terrific football and many penalties resulted. Now Kiser had to punt but Bill Jones, the orange and black safety man, let the ball slipped through his fingers and ever alert Paul Bryan recovered on the 33 yard line. Joe Bryan now filled the air with passes, alternating to Reeder and Gaylor. The blue and gold were clicking now and that meant no denial.

Another pass is called and there goes Ray Reeder behind the goal line to snatch a pass for the first touchdown of the game. Bryan added the extra point and Kiser led 7-0.

The second quarter of the game saw great defensive play with excellent punting thrilling the spectators. Young Lee Fenner, standing behind his own goal line in a do or die effort toed a soaring kick that spiraled 60 yards to the 50 yard stripe.

Shortly after the third quarter began a pass interference was called against Kiser. This costly penalty placed the ball on the panther 12 yard line and little Dick Shafer, calm as a cucumber, passed to Fenner in the end zone for a touchdown. Score Kiser 7-Stivers 6. Time out and from the Stivers bench came a newcomer named Walters who was to attempt a dropkick for the extra point. Drop kicking in scholastic football seemed a lost art since the days of Ollie Klee and Ray Otto. But in came Walters.

The youngster seemed nervous as the ball was snapped-but between the uprights it went and so high that one wondered if the ball would ever come down. Jim Thorpe in his heyday could not have done a better job than Walters that brisk November day, 1934.

The score was now 7-7. Now came plenty of fireworks with Kiser doing the shooting. Around end, off tackle and through the air in seven spectacular plays and Kiser had another touchdown.

Conversion failed and the score stood Kiser 13 Stivers 7. Now it was Stivers turn to handle the ball and they passed and plunged until they were within 4 yards of that elusive stripe called goal .Four precious yards to go but here Kiser held. Possibly the Panthers envisioned the toe of Walters who was anxiously awaiting a call from his coach.

Ray Reeder was behind his goal line to punt but instead he grounded the ball to give Stivers an intentional safety. It was smart football on the part of the Kiser quarterback because in less than a minute the game ended with Kiser the winner 13-9.

Stivers did not have an off day. The Kiser Panthers just carried too much wallop as she vanquished and vaunted Stivers phalanz which until that day held as the Greeks of old. Even the confusing razzle-dazzle of Stivers was no avail. Nevertheless it was a great game and the better team won.

Kiser had one more local opponent to tie or defeat and this championship was hers. This deciding game came the following week with the Fairview bulldog who vicious and lean, played his greatest game of the season. For the first two periods it was all Fairview. Roland Diers, Fairview fullback crashed through for a touchdown and left end Rowe caught a pass for the extra point. And the game was only six minutes old. Fairview that November day dished out more basketball and lateral passes than had ever been seen in a local football game. Coach Roy Mayberry, the Fox of Dayton View, certainly opened a bag of tricks.

Kiser soon knotted the score when Ray Reeder twisted and squirmed 47 yards to a touchdown. Joe Bryan converted with a place kick. Fairview retaliated when Richard Jackson (a casualty of the recent war by the way) heaved a long pass to Diers for a touchdown but Brown failed to convert. Shortly thereafter the gun cracked and the game ended 13 all.

All other Dayton high schools had been defeated in local competition. Hence Kiser in the four victories and one tie had won her first city championship in football.

Well friends the old covered bridge has long since disappeared and the old channel, that stream of romance and adventure, lies still; the Gypsies have moved on with guitars and motled garb. Texas beyond mad River is no more-but North Dayton moves on as a progressive adjunct of our city and the chaste spirit of Daniel Kiser lives every day out on Leo Street in the classrooms, in the corridors and on the Athletic Field of Kiser high school.

Robert Worst

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