

10-2006

Queens of the Court: The Kildare Lady Eagles of 1937-1945

Gail Dorgan

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/ethj>

 Part of the [United States History Commons](#)

Tell us how this article helped you.

Recommended Citation

Dorgan, Gail (2006) "Queens of the Court: The Kildare Lady Eagles of 1937-1945," *East Texas Historical Journal*: Vol. 44: Iss. 2, Article 8.

Available at: <http://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/ethj/vol44/iss2/8>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by SFA ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in East Texas Historical Journal by an authorized administrator of SFA ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact cdsscholarworks@sfasu.edu.

QUEENS OF THE COURT: THE KILDARE LADY EAGLES 1937-1945

By Gail Dorgan

If the football team has just lost the second game of the season without scoring a point, how can school officials offset the loss? Announce that the "girls basketball team, the club which ran a string of victories up to 115, will stage its first game."

Formed in 1937, the Kildare Lady Eagles posted an impressive record on the court and set the standard for teams to follow. Teams traveled more than 200 miles for the opportunity to play the famous Lady Eagles, who accumulated a three-year record of 258 wins and seven losses, none by more than six points, and "never finished lower than second place in any tournament entered." On March 30, 1939, *The Citizens Journal* reported that the Lady Eagles "had won the East Texas Championship, the Cass County Championship, runner-up for the West Louisiana Championship, and runner-up in the North Texas Tournament." That same year the Lady Eagles scored "1862 [points] making an average of 29 points per game." Statistics such as these ensured the Lady Eagles of 1937 to 1945 a place in the history of the school and the town of Kildare, Texas. While many communities the size of Kildare did not have girls basketball, Kildare stressed the sport and achieved greatness during an era in which the student population of Kildare School diminished to such an extent that some classes graduated only four students.¹

Basketball in Kildare began on dirt courts located on the playground of the five-teacher, wood-frame school building. In 1937 tax revenue from oil companies allowed Kildare to construct a modern brick school building with "one of the most modern, well-equipped gymnasiums in East Texas." Many fans experienced indoor plumbing and electricity for the first time in this gym. It boasted "nineteen 300-watt lamps. These lamps are so arranged that it is impossible to make a shadow on the playing court." A 110-volt Kohler generator furnished electricity for the school since Kildare did not have electric lines installed until 1939. Ornan Whatley declared, "I saw the lights get awfully dim, but they didn't ever have to call a game off because the lights went down." The gymnasium's "two dressing rooms, equipped with 12 showers, occupied the west [boys'] and the east [girls'] ends of the gymnasium." The Lady Eagles rarely used the dressing rooms during a home game; rather, one player remembered, they "gave the visitors the dressing rooms" and "went into a classroom with a curtain over the window. Mrs. Grainger or Mrs. Nelson would tell Mr. Alexander [the coach] when we were ready so he could talk to us before a game and give us a pep talk." The Lady Eagles had to clean the dressing rooms after each game or practice, a requirement imposed on them by Coach C.C. Alexander.²

To compliment the new gym, Alexander assembled the first boy's and girl's basketball teams comprised of students from the sixth to the eleventh grade for the Kildare School System. R.S. Beasley, principal of Kildare High,

and Joe H. Seay supervised the boys' teams while Alexander coached the girls' team. Alexander had been a girl's basketball coach at Oak Grove prior to becoming superintendent at Kildare. Maudie Bell Dennison, Marie Howard, Mildred Whatley, Billie Arden Wharton, Mildred Simmons, Vionne Simmons, Ida Beard, Lucile Jones, June Haggard, Mary Dotson, and Marie Blue constituted the 1937-1938 Lady Eagles' lineup. Future Lady Eagles looked up to these original players as a source of inspiration and motivation.

Alexander suggested that Kildare use the colors of his alma mater, Stephen F. Austin State University, so purple and white became the official colors of the Eagles. Each team that donned the purple satin uniform had to adhere to rules set forth by the coaching staff. Coaches C.C. Alexander, Merle Grainger – who became the lady Eagle's coach when Alexander left – and Doris Downs required players to conduct themselves properly. Failure to do so resulted in the forfeiture of eligibility for the next game. "If we got sent to study hall, boys or girls, for any reason like chewing gum or whatever, you didn't get to practice ball that day. If it was for something worse than chewing gum you didn't even get to play ball," remembered Lady Eagle Jean Watley Salmon. "You worked to keep your grades up and you didn't want to get behind. We knew that if we did, we didn't get to play ball. You didn't have any privileges. That was Coach Alexander's rules."³

While on the court, coaches expected the ladies to display common courtesy toward the opposing team. Mary (Dotson) Swanner recalled that Coach Alexander preached that someone had to lose and a loss must be accepted gracefully. Alexander's philosophy on winning and losing evidenced itself in a game against Fulton, Mississippi, on March 29, 1940. After being defeated, the Kildare girls

dashed down the hall to the classroom and dressed and bawled and squalled. I [Mary Dotson Swanner, a former Lady Eagle] made up my mind that if I got beat I wasn't gonna act like that. I remembered that Mr. Alex [Coach Alexander] always told us that someone had to lose and that I had a good winning streak and if I lose I'm gonna take it like I'm suppose to. I was up there [on the court] congratulating the girls from the other team and telling them what a good team they were. Coach Alex went down to the dressing room and they were all crying and he asked, 'Where's Mary?' Nobody knew, so they all came out on the court and there I was out there with the girls from the other team. Coach Alex asked me why I wasn't crying and I told him that we had done the best we could and it wasn't good enough so why cry about it? Coach Alex fussed at the other girls and told that 'someone had to lose and it was your turn tonight so take it like a man.' He didn't want to see another tear.⁴

On February 9, 1938, in a game against the Louisiana state champion team from Castor, Louisiana, the referee called only one foul against the Eagles. Kildare players took pride in what they considered a confirmation of their good character on the court. Another testament to the ladylike sportsmanship of the Eagles occurred on February 16, 1939, in a two-game matchup against Wolfe City, Texas, when "the same six players started both games and not a player fouled out."⁵

Alexander, Grainger, and Downs also expected the Lady Eagles to exhibit good grooming. Players proudly displayed white rubber-soled sneakers—painted with white shoe polish and never worn anywhere but in the gymnasium—white socks, a spotless uniform, and fixed hair. “Coach Alexander always made sure we had money for perms at the beginning of the school year. He also bought shoes for those who couldn’t afford them. If we didn’t have the money he would give it to us out of the athletic fund. He said we were the ones who made the money and he wanted us to look nice,” revealed Swanner.⁶

Lady Eagles experienced preferential treatment when it came to recognizing their achievements. Student Orman Whatley recalled that assemblies were held every Monday morning during C.C. Alexander’s tenure as superintendent of the Kildare School. Sometimes it would be a short assembly, but if the girls were on a winning streak, “by the time he congratulated all the girls and gave out the gold basketball pins, the morning would be half over.”

Alexander went to great lengths to express confidence in his Lady Eagles. Whatley recalled a time when the team played a championship game against Bright Star, Arkansas. “I can show you one picture where Alexander was so confident his team would win the championship game that he already had the championship trophy made with an eagle on it. Bright Star won that game and he just swapped the trophies and gave Bright Star what should have been the second place trophy.”⁷

Alexander publicized his team to the best of his abilities. He provided press releases and information regarding the Kildare School to *The Citizens Journal* from 1937 to 1942. Readers of the paper could find articles extolling the virtues of the Lady Eagles and recounting their various victories against “championship” teams. Alexander’s media prowess paid off as newspaper reports claimed, “Many veterans of girls’ basketball are saying this [Kildare versus Leesburg] was the greatest game ever seen in this section of the state.” Other media reports claimed that “The Kildare girls flashed back their usual form that made them so popular and famous this season by smashing Longstreet, La., the DeSoto Parish champions, by a score of 71 to 18.” Another article stated, “The famed Kildare High School girls’ team needs no introduction in the Ark-La-Tex area for the record they have made has been one of history in girls’ basketball.”⁸

While the Lady Eagles enjoyed playing the sport, just getting to the games often required the participation of the entire community of Kildare. In the early days of the Lady Eagles, Coach Alexander made sure that every Kildare school student who wanted to attend the girls’ home game could do so. He had the buses run their regular routes and pick up the students who wanted to go to the game. “Parents that didn’t have cars or the dads were off working and the mother didn’t have a way were allowed to ride the bus. Our bus drivers went out to pick up all the kids who wanted to come to the game because a lot of people didn’t have cars.”⁹

Buses took the players to games close to Kildare, and often the boys’ and girls’ teams rode the same bus. “Our regular drivers took us to the away games.

There were four drivers who took turns taking us to the games. We could sing and talk on the bus but we couldn't get loud or move around much," recalled Salmon. Bobbie (Washington) Kirkland remembered one bus trip when the coach allowed her boyfriend to ride the team bus. "One night I decided that I didn't want to play ball because Charles had come in from basic training. The coach told me Charles could ride the bus this one time if I would play basketball that night."¹⁰

"School buses that carry teams to games, or transport school bands, debating teams, and other such groups on excursions will lose their eligibility for tires," stated a press release issued by the Cass County War Price and Rationing Board in 1942 after notification from the Office of Price Headquarters. Determined to keep the Eagle basketball spirit alive and to repay the kindness shown by Coach Alexander during the previous years, residents of Kildare volunteered their private cars to take the girls to games. "We had to go all over Kildare to find someone to take us to the games. We didn't know until we got to the school whether we had a way to the game or not," said Whatley.¹¹

Travel to away games became an adventure for the team. Salmon remembered, "We would get six girls and a driver in a car and they took us to the out of town games." "They wouldn't have got to go to the games if we hadn't just loaded them up and taken them since there weren't any buses because they didn't have any more tires and gas was rationed," recalled Orman Whatley. The following of the Kildare girls was not as strong during these years because of the distance of the games played and the rationing of gas.¹²

Road games also offered the Lady Eagles broadening experiences. Tradition dictated that members of the host team would provide accommodations and meals in their homes for visiting team members. "In Fulton, Mississippi, we stayed in the homes of the players there. Mr. and Mrs. Nelson, Opal Cates, and I stayed in the same house," recalled Swanner. In turn, the Lady Eagles hosted their opponents. "My sister Mildred would bring a lot of girls home. Most of the time they would come home with her on Friday and stay there until they went back for the game," reminisced Orman Whatley. Tire and gasoline rationing eventually limited the distances that teams could travel, and the tradition of staying with opposing team members dissipated. By 1949 teams rarely traveled distances that required overnight stays. "The longest time we ever stayed away was two days. We stayed in a dormitory when we played Dallas in a championship game," stated Kirkland, who also recalled only one time in the four years she played basketball for the Eagles when the team stayed with the host team's players.¹³

Coach C.C. Alexander always ensured that the team, the fans, and the officials would have a wonderful time while attending games at the Kildare gym. He personally greeted the fans and thanked them for attending. Great anticipation preceded his pre-game welcome speeches because fans never knew what to expect from the charismatic coach of the Lady Eagles. He cared about promoting women's basketball and often gave Kildare residents access

to the gymnasium even if they did not have the ten-cent price of admission.

The atmosphere of the game left an impression on each girl who played for the Lady Eagles. Fans cheered wildly whenever the Lady Eagles took the court. "We came out of the dressing room and circled around the court. Everyone was hollering and going on and the band was playing 'The Kildare Eagles Will Shine Tonight.' We ran around the court and everyone would cheer until we got back to the end of the court we would start practicing on," recounted Salmon.¹⁴

Crowds packed the Kildare gym any time the girls played basketball. "That was a drawing card to get the gym full to see the girls play ball. Girl's basketball was more exciting. The boys lost a lot," stated Whatley. A November 3, 1938, newspaper account of a game against Elysian Fields estimated "seven hundred fans [were] there to see the famous Kildare girl cagers." People stood in the double doorways located on the west and east sides of the gym and in the two sets of double doors leading into the hallway of the school and sat in the three rows of seats across the sides. "At times they also put chairs across the stage. They built a wire cage across the stage [located behind one of the goals] so the ball wouldn't go in," recalled Whatley.¹⁵

Orman Whatley also recalled that the crowds loved to see the Lady Eagles play the team from Waskom because Waskom had a female referee, Mrs. Helen Brewer. "She called most of the games. She kept the girls in line and a lot of people came to the games just to see her because it was almost unheard of to have a female official back then."¹⁶

Coverage of the Lady Eagles' upcoming games often included statements encouraging the public to attend the sporting event proclaiming, "The Eagles can be defeated, having lost last Wednesday night to Bright Star, Arkansas State Champions, by a score of 44 to 22." When the Lady Eagles played Wolfe City, Texas, newspaper reports claimed, "Wolfe City seems to be the favorite to win at least one, if not both of the games," but when the Eagles proved victorious the article read, "The Kildare girls went on to further fame by defeating the Wolfe City Wolves of Hunt County, one of the greatest teams ever to be assembled in North Texas." Other stories regarding the Lady Eagles included the phrase "Kildare's famous high school girls' basketball team" and claimed that "Kildare is boasting the greatest girl's basketball team in the state for the greatest team to ever be assembled in the southwest. They will be defeated occasionally, so be on hand January 5-6 to see them win, lose, or draw."¹⁷

The Kildare gymnasium offered fans many treats, including a chance to witness the first Kildare girls' basketball team in action. Media coverage of the 1937 - 1938 team proclaimed, "Two of the Kildare star forwards are the well-known Mary Dotson and Marie Blue, former Oak Grove stars, who have played in 107 games and have never known defeat. The people of Kildare are hailing them as the two greatest forwards in Texas." According to Swanner, she and Marie Blue had "played together all of their lives and knew what to expect of each other. She played the field because she could make the long shots; they call them three pointers now. I played under the basket and if she missed I

could jump higher than most of the girls and I would back it up for her. She [Marie] always knew where I would be.”

Swanner and Blue dominated the court with their superior shooting skills. In a game against Longstreet, Louisiana, “Mary Dotson and Marie Blue accounted for 54 points of the Eagles’ score (97 to 18) in little more than the first half.” A press account of the game in 1938 against Bright Star, Arkansas, proclaimed, “The feature of the game was the first five shots taken by the Kildare forwards resulted in points being scored. The score at the end of the first eight minutes of play was Kildare 16 and Bright Star 0.” Swanner and Blue combined shooting abilities on December 21, 1938, when they “exhibited the most sensational scoring ever seen in the Kildare gym. Mary Dotson was high scorer of the game with 32 points scored in 24 minutes of play. Marie Blue was the next high pointer with 18 points, most of which was sensational shots. These two girls scored 50 points in 24 minutes of play.” During the Tri-State Championship final game in 1939, Marie Blue “found the basket fourteen out of fifteen times and scored a total of twenty eight points and sent the team to a smashing 53 – 31 victory over Cookville.”¹⁸

Swanner played basketball for the Eagles from 1937 until 1940. Prior to that she played for Oak Grove, where she helped “form the nucleus for ... [Oak Grove’s] sextet” and established a reputation as an outstanding forward. Swanner’s career at Oak Grove began in the sixth grade and expanded to include a record of having “never been defeated over a period of four years.”

I started playing basketball with the main team in the sixth grade. We had a lady coach in Oak Grove and she wouldn’t let me play on the team because my sister was playing. This coach left to tend to her sick father and the team went to Mr. Alexander and asked him to coach the girls. He was the boys’ coach then. The team promised him if he would take over we would do our best to win. Mr. Alexander quit the boys’ team to coach the girls. He was the first one to put me in. He promised us he would start those who played the hardest and did their best, recalled Swanner.

Oak Grove did not offer the upper grades, so Swanner transferred to Kildare in 1937 to begin her ninth-grade year. “I’ve been asked if they [Kildare School] paid us money to play for Kildare and the answer is NO! We didn’t go to [the] Atlanta school because they wouldn’t run a bus. Kildare would.”¹⁹

Swanner described her career as a Lady Eagle as wonderful. “Best times of my life was playing ball. We had a good coach and good girls to play with.” Swanner did her best to live up to fan expectations of her playing abilities. She would not let illness or pain stop her. “Mary Dotson, the star forward of the Eagles, came back strong after hopping through the Leeburg game with a rison on her leg to score 24 points.” On March 3, 1939, the Ebenezer cagers witnessed Swanner’s prowess on the basketball court. *The Citizens Journal* reported, “Mary Dotson led the scoring parade which saw 101 points chalked up, with 34 tallies and Marie Blue was runner-up with 15.” By March 1939 Swanner, “Kildare’s all state forward,” had scored “an average of 28 points per game or a total of 1176,” reported *The Citizens Journal*.²⁰

Alexander's media campaign proved successful in its ability to draw crowds to witness the Kildare girls achieve basketball fame. Press attention waned after Alexander's departure in 1942 due to declining enrollment, talk of consolidation, and a better job offer. Games no longer received front-page coverage and few reports concerning the Kildare girls' basketball team or the Kildare community were written. Coverage of Kildare events shifted from the *Citizens Journal* to the *Cass County Sun*, which focused almost exclusively on Linden, Texas. Both papers, *The Cass County Sun* and *The Citizens Journal*, from 1942 until 1945 focused on war issues and contained little or no information regarding sports.

Lady Eagles' games also provided the crowd with the opportunity to see and hear the school band. Seated on the stage, the band played for the team before, during, and after games. Whatley stated, "To really rattle the other team Coach Alexander would give Mr. Robison [the band director] the high sign and the band would come out playing 'Kildare Will Shine Tonight,' 'Beer Barrel Polka' or 'Alexander's Ragtime Band.' You could hear it out on [highway] 125 and down the road a ways." Salmon maintained that "You never heard in your life the music that band played at the games. They played 'Alexander's Ragtime Band' because his name was C.C. Alexander. The band would cheer him and the team on at the half. If the game was dragging Mr. Robison would strike up the band and the place would roar. I mean, he [Mr. Robison] really let loose on those games." The band played for the Lady Eagles for many years; however, in 1949 cheerleaders replaced the band as a source of motivation for the basketball team.²¹

Swanner recalled a time when Coach C.C. Alexander refused to let the team run up the score against another team. "He kept taking us out even though everyone kept hollering at him to put us back in because they [the fans] wanted to see us reach 100 points. Coach Alexander didn't believe in skunking anyone." Swanner cites a game against Caddo Sporting Goods as evidence of Alexander's sense of fair play. "On Saturday night December 16 the Kildare girls trounced the Caddo Sporting Goods team, leaders of the Marshall League 93 to 6. Coach Alexander played two full teams in order to hold the score as low as possible." Alexander also pulled his starting players in a March 24, 1938, game against Longstreet, Louisiana, 1938 DeSoto Parish champions, to keep the score down. Alexander removed Swanner and Blue after the first half of the game in favor of his "B" forwards. Kildare won the game by a score of 71 to 18.²²

Swanner's Kildare basketball career allowed her to travel through many states playing the game she loved. Her career as an Eagle ended on March 22-23, 1940, at Fulton, Mississippi. Even though the Eagles lost to the Mississippi State Champions they did not feel bad because "Fulton has the best girls' team ever seen by the Kildare girls," quoted *The Citizens Journal*.²³

Mary (Tip) Whatley joined Swanner and the Eagles in 1940 as a sixth grader and played until 1943. Coach Alexander had seen Whatley's basketball abilities when, as a fourth grader, she played on the dirt courts located in the

schoolyard. "He would say, "You're going to be a good ball player. You're going to be a great ball player." "He would get tickled at some of the things we would do," recalled Whatley. She also credited Alexander with taking an interest in the younger Kildare students and cultivating their dedication to the sport of basketball.

As a sixth grader Whatley began her career on the Eagles "B" team coached by Mr. Joe H. Seay. "I played guard, but I could play forward. In the Class B Championship game Mr. Seay took me out in the middle of the game and he put Louise back in my place there playing guard. Well, I made 13 points and we won the game. Once in a while they did weird things and it would work to win a game."²⁴

As Whatley matured Alexander rewarded her athletic prowess by allowing her to travel with the team and practice with Swanner, Blue, and the rest of the Eagles' team. "I couldn't hardly wait for the game to start. I was awfully young to get to play when I did," exclaimed Whatley.

Whatley and Swanner recalled instances when it proved difficult to maintain the ladylike composure expected of team members. One opposing team had "a big girl on the team that night and she kept hitting me. Finally I hit her. I was on the other end of the court and the referee didn't call it. She was just a mean girl. She just kept hitting me when the referee wasn't looking." Whatley also experienced a black eye when a member of her team, Lillie Belle Varnell, got the ball and ran from one end of the court to the other, where she collided with Whatley.²⁵

Swanner recounted a time in which it proved difficult for her to maintain her composure. In a game against Bright Star, Arkansas, she continually felt herself being "pricked" with a sharp object. Every time she got near one particular Bright Star player the girl would stick her with a pin she had hidden on her person.

In 1944 a new team took the court. Jean (Whatley) Salmon played for the Eagles, now coached by Merle Grainger, from 1944 until 1946. Undocumented Kildare lore claims that Salmon's Lady Eagles won a state championship in 1945. Years later Salmon could not remember if the team had won a state championship. "I know we went to China, Texas, where Mr. Alexander went when he left Kildare, and at Colmesneil, Texas, and played in a tournament. We won and they said we won the state tournament. The tournament at Colmesneil started at 10 that morning. We played until 8 that night. We played about four games that day, the last being the championship game."

One of Salmon's fondest memories of games included Coach C.C. Alexander. "At the Colmesneil game he [Alexander] said, 'I've got two teams here. I don't know who is going to be the winner, but I've got a winner either way. Where I used to be or where I am now [China, Texas].'"

Other games Salmon remembered playing included games against Avinger, Jefferson, McLeod, Huffines, and Bright Star. "The games I remember the most are the ones against Avinger because they were so big [tall] and

played so rough. We would also go to McLeod one year, Kildare the next, or Huffines to play in a Tri-State Tournament. Bivins didn't have a team. They had a school and a dirt court. Linden had a dirt court but not a girl's team," recalled Salmon.²⁶

Despite its success in basketball dwindling enrollment took a toll on the Kildare School. The downsizing of the Phillips 66 camp resulted in a dramatic decrease in student population. Talk of consolidation with either Atlanta or McLeod began to circulate in 1945. The Kildare School ceased to exist in 1958 when officials decided to consolidate with Linden, Texas. The closing of the school marked the end of two decades of girls' basketball superiority. Linden-Kildare officials deemed that sports for girls was not lady-like and phased out girls' basketball until early in the 1980s.

Despite having lost their school to consolidation and later to fire, the members of the Kildare Lady Eagles proudly displayed the treasured keepsakes of their past. Frayed purple sweaters, black-and-white photos of shiny-faced young women dressed in basketball uniforms bring tender smiles and a sense of the past to those who witnessed the existence of a twenty-year basketball dynasty. Each player recalled their days as a Lady Eagle as one of the best times of their lives. The trophies and awards won by the girls' basketball team and housed in the school's trophy case perished in a fire at the school after it had been converted into a community center. They now survive only in the memories of the Kildare alumni and those fortunate enough to have observed the dominating basketball played in the tiny Northeast Texas town of Kildare. As long as there remains even one family member, friend, or school-mate who remembers, the members of the Kildare girls' basketball team will continue their reign as the queens of the court.

We're loyal to you Kildare High
 We're steadfast and true, Kildare High
 Our school is our pride and joy
 Victory to you Kildare High, rah rah.

We're loyal to you Kildare High
 The purple and White, Kildare High
 We'll back you to stand, 'gainst the best in the land
 We're loyal to you Kildare High, rah, rah.²⁷

NOTES

¹"Kildare Cagers Open Season Friday Night," *The Citizens Journal*, October 20, 1938, p.1.
²"Kildare Eagles Girls Basketball Team and Coach," *The Citizens Journal*, March 2, 1939, p. 1.
³"Kildare Wins East Texas Championship," *The Citizens Journal*, March 30, 1939, p. 1.

⁴"Kildare School Has Large Gym," *The Citizens Journal*, September 23, 1937, p. 1; Orman Whatley, interview by author, Kildare, Texas, March 29, 2002; Jean Whatley Salmon, interview by author, Linden, Texas, April 8, 2002.

⁵Mary Ramsey Whatley, interview by author, Kildare, Texas, March 29, 2002; Salmon interview, April 8, 2002.

⁶Mary Dotson Swanner, interview by author, Kildare, Texas, June 15, 2002.

¹⁸"Kildare Defeats Wolfe City in Two Games," *The Citizens Journal*, February 16, 1939, p. 1.

¹⁹Mary Dotson Swanner, interview by author, Bivins, Texas, April 19, 2002.

²⁰Orman Whatley interview, March 29, 2002.

²¹"Kildare Loses First Game 30 - 33," *The Citizens Journal*, January 20, 1938, p. 1; "Kildare Eagles Swamp Champions," *The Citizens Journal*, March 24, 1939, p. 1; "Kildare Girls to Play Jr. College," *The Citizens Journal*, January 25, 1940, p. 3.

²²Salmon interview, April 8, 2002.

²³Salmon interview, April 8, 2002; Bobbie Washington Kirkland, interview by author, Linden, Texas, April 8, 2002.

²⁴"School Buses Not Permitted Tires for Excursions," *The Citizens Journal*, September 3, 1942, p. 1; Mary Ramsey Whatley interview, March 29, 2002.

²⁵Salmon interview, April 8, 2002; Orman Whatley interview, March 29, 2002.

²⁶Swanner interview, April 19, 2002; Orman Whatley interview, March 29, 2002; Kirkland interview, April 8, 2002.

²⁷Salmon interview, April 8, 2002.

²⁸Orman Whatley interview, March 29, 2002; "Kildare Girls Win Over Elysian Fields," *The Citizens Journal*, November 3, 1938, p. 1; Mary Ramsey Whatley interview, March 29, 2002.

²⁹Orman Whatley interview, March 29, 2002.

³⁰"Kildare Girls to Meet Plain Dealing," *The Citizens Journal*, January 18, 1940, p. 2; "Kildare Girls to Meet Wolfe City," *The Citizens Journal*, February 9, 1939, p. 1; "Kildare Defeats Wolfe City Girls," *The Citizens Journal*, February 23, 1939, p. 1; "Kildare Girls Defeat Waldo Team," *The Citizens Journal*, December 21, 1939, p. 1.

³¹"Kildare School Is Increasing," *The Citizens Journal*, November 18, 1939, p. 1; Swanner interview, June 15, 2002; "Kildare Eagles Swamp Champions," *The Citizens Journal*, March 24, 1938, p. 1; "Kildare Wins Double Header," *The Citizens Journal*, December 22, 1938, p. 1; "Kildare Defeats Fouke, Ark., Girls," *The Citizens Journal*, December 29, 1938, p. 1; "Kildare Girls Win Tri-State Championship," *The Citizens Journal*, February 3, 1939, p. 1.

³²"Oak Grove Wins County Championship," *The Cass County Sun*, March 19, 1936, p. 1; Swanner interview, April 19, 2002.

³³Swanner interview, April 19, 2002; "Kildare Girls Smash Cookville," *The Citizens Journal*, January 27, 1938, p. 1; "Kildare Cagers Down Ebenezer," *The Citizens Journal*, March 9, 1939, p. 1; "Kildare Wins East Texas Championship," *The Citizens Journal*, March 30, 1939, p. 1.

³⁴Orman Whatley interview, March 29, 2002; Salmon interview, April 8, 2002.

³⁵Swanner interview, April 19, 2002; "Kildare Girls Defeat Waldo Team," *The Citizens Journal*, December 21, 1939, p. 1.

³⁶"Kildare Girls Lose to Mississippi Champs," *The Citizens Journal*, March 28, 1940, p. 1.

³⁷Mary Ramsey Whatley interview, March 29, 2002.

³⁸Mary Ramsey Whatley interview, March 29, 2002.

³⁹Salmon interview, April 8, 2002.

⁴⁰Alma Mater of Kildare High, Kildare High School Reunion Newsletter, June 24, 1995.