

You've perhaps seen on Facebook or elsewhere the list of ways you know you grew up in a small town. One of the ways on the list is that you went to school with cousins. Well growing up in West Concord, I'm not sure there were many who didn't go to school with cousins. And over the years, as I read an obituary of a long time community member, I discover that someone was related to someone else and I had no idea. I had seven cousins that went to West Concord High School. And all five of us Kleven kids went to WCHS as well. Patti Ryg Krier is one of my cousins. She was in the class of 1967. Patti married Mike Krier, who was class of 1962.

Recently Mike and Patti handed me two cassette tapes that had a recording of the 1961 high school football game between the Cardinals and the Dodge Center Dodgers. I converted it to a digital format. The broadcast was on 1390AM KRFO radio that year. It was homecoming for West Concord. I was in 3rd grade that year and I was at this game. All of the grade school students got to go. Now you'll recall we were the 'Wrigley Field' of high school football for all the years of WCHS meaning no lights, no night games. Wrigley finally got lights in the summer of 1988 but the West Concord school district never did get lights. And to this day, I'll run into someone who played at Bryon or Pine Island or any of the other Wasioja conference schools that always bring up the day games at WC. The first thing they say was they were so glad to get out of school early to go to the game. We who attended WCHS always enjoyed home games for that very reason.



On that fall day in 1961, it was warm and very windy. That field, which was eye level with the roof of the high school building, was conducive to high winds and punts that went for negative yardage. This particular game was huge as Dodge Center came into the game with a 25 game winning streak. There were no playoffs back then but if there were, Dodge Center certainly would have had a couple of state championships. Both teams were run oriented, strong and very tough defensively. Dodge Center in the 1960 game had defeated WC by a 19-7 score. This game in '61' was for bragging rights for Dodge County, at least the northern part of the county. Hayfield and Kasson both defeated West Concord during this season. West Concord was 3-1 going into this game after the Kasson loss. Dodge Center was 4-0 or really 25-0.

Mike Krier was the quarterback this season. The starting running backs were Nick Wilson, Richard Neumann and co-captain Roger Vrieze was the hard running 190 pound fullback. Mike told me he was probably the smallest quarterback the conference ever had. He stood all of 5'4" and weighed 118 pounds. It's fun to listen to the old broadcast as this game may have been one of the best and biggest in WCHS history. Krier fumbled early in the game and then the next

play Larry Gochnauer recovered a DC fumble. And so the game went, back and forth with lots of tough defense and 10 total fumbles.

The Dodgers took the early lead on a touchdown by Darrel Schuster. Back in the day, you only got one extra point whether you kicked it or ran it in. DC ran it in for the 7-0 first half lead. Late in the first half, Leon Sprieter caught a pass from Krier down to the Dodgers 13 yard line. With time running out in the first half, 4th down on the 18 yard line, West Concord lined up for a field goal attempt with Vrieze holding and Krier kicking. But alas, it was a fake as Vrieze pitched to Krier, he moved left and as he was about to be pummeled by a 'green wave', he threw to a wide open Richard Neumann for the touchdown. WC attempted to kick the extra point, this time with Krier holding and Neumann kicking but it went left and the halftime score was 7-6 with the Dodgers leading.

The band played at halftime in their sharp black and red uniforms. The Homecoming royalty was on hand including the Homecoming Queen Jureene Hilling or as we all know her by the name Reenie.

The 2nd half was just as exciting and hard hitting as the first half. Early in the 2nd half, Neumann punted into the wind and lost 15 yards. DC had the ball deep in WC territory. Roger Vrieze intercepted a Bruce Meyers pass in the end zone. In the fourth quarter, Leon Sprieter recovered a fumble on the Dodge Center 5 yard line. Vrieze fumbled the ball away on the 1 yard line. WC recovered another fumble, this time on the 6 yard line. As it was described in the play by play, this game had more ups and downs than an elevator in the Empire State building in New York. From the 4 yard line, Richard Neumann ran in the go ahead touchdown. Extra point attempt was an incomplete pass. The WC defense held and the Cardinals halted the Dodge Center 25 game winning streak.

It's very interesting to listen to some of the old radio ads that were announced during the broadcast of the game. You could get \$20 off a Land O' Nod Posture Rest mattress at Ferguson Furniture and Funeral Home in West Concord. Mattresses were regularly priced at \$69.50. You could make your fall wardrobe complete at Geraldine's Dress Shop in downtown West Concord. For your motoring car pleasure, go to Swanson's Service, your Mobil dealer in West Concord.

1961 Frigidaire washers and dryers, refrigerators, freezers and water heaters on sale before the 62 models arrive. Get an 11 cubic foot upright food freezer for only \$229.95 at Pirkl and Hall Appliance. Get yours today and receive \$50 worth of frozen food of your choice. Stop in and see Butch at Sorenson Implement to trade in your corn picker on a new John Deere corn picker. Don't use a picker that only gets half the corn; assure yourself the finest with a new corn picker from Sorenson Implement.

As the game neared the end, Mike Ketchum of Dodge Center and Mike Krier of West Concord nearly poked each other and after the game, they walked off with their arms draped across each other's shoulder pads. The announcer called it one of the greatest things you'll see. If you'd like to get a copy of the recording, send me an email and we can go from there:

emery@roadfarming.com

From the 1962 West Concord High School yearbook is a picture of the football team. I believe this was taken during Homecoming as the goalpost is all decorated in red and white.



Left to right: First row: B. Round, M. Krier, L. Goeknauer, D. Montgomery, L. Lulf, Co-captain, R. Vrieze, Co-captain, S. Spreiter, W. Wynkoop, S. Streiff, Second row: S. Blaisdell, S. Wilson, Managers, D. Wilson, D. Flieck, M. Smith, G. Knippel, D. Tengwall, D. Olson, A. Callister, P. Hanson, G. Trelstad, W. Wilson, T. Wilson, D. Wilson, B. Bartholomew, R. Mildenstein, Managers, Third row: Coach, Mr. Sorenson, S. Agerter, R. Nueman, L. Yeo, T. Callister, D. Dokermann, M. Ryan, K. Frederiek, L. Hanson, C. Walker, S. Bennerottee, L., D. Stensland, R. Hanson, Asst. Coach, Mr. Koehler.