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### Oral History Interview: W.S. "Dick" Griffith

W S. Griffith

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ORAL HISTORY OF APPALACHIA  
 400 Hal Greer Boulevard  
 Huntington, West Virginia 25755-2667  
 304/696-6799

SUBJECT: Coach Carl Ward  
CK Football

ORAL HISTORY NUMBER: WVC.C. 15

MORROW ACCESSION NUMBER: #351

ORAL HISTORY

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I, W.S. Griffith, the undersigned, of Ceredo-Kenova,  
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 is gained from me or my assigns.  
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DATE X 7/13/93

X W.S. (Dick) Griffith  
 (Signature - Interviewee)

1104 Chestnut St  
 (Address)

Kenova, WV 25530  
 (Phone)

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (Signature - Interviewer)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (Address)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (Phone)

WVC.C.15

WEST VIRGINIA COMMUNITIES - CEREDO

AN ORAL INTERVIEW WITH: W.S. "DICK" GRIFFITH

CONDUCTED BY: MICHAEL LEWIS

DATE OF INTERVIEW: DECEMBER 1, 1984

TRANSCRIBED & TYPED BY: GINA KEHALI KATES

Mike: Oral History Interview with uh, Mr. Dick Griffith, Ceredo-Kenova, Mike Lewis, 12-1-84, uh, Mr. Griffith is a business man in the town. He's a very uh, staunch supporter of Ceredo-Kenova athletics. He's been a follower for years uh, he played personally and his children have played and grandchildren now are playing in the uh, in the winning ways of CK. Uh, Mr. Griffith, could you tell us uh, why do you think that C-K has such a successful athletic program under Carl Ward?

Dick: Well, their main success I think, has been not only the...they're capable of coaching and doing the job that they are hired to do, is that for any business or any household or any coaching staff the members must have mutual respect for one another. And as a result, the players have never been confused in their mind as to who was to give them instruction and they were never confused about Coal Ward thought it ought to be this way, and Coach Craycraft thought it ought to be another way. When the team went on the field, what defense Coach Craycraft told 'em to play, was what they played. And what Coach Ward told 'em to do was what they did. They never...the two men respected one another's judgment, and always stood behind whatever the other one said. Regardless of if...they may have different feelings at that time, about what play ought to be run or what the team should do, they never discussed one another's judgment or so our boys, through the years have played with confidence, we're doing what is gonna make us a champion.

Mike: Uh, with uh, an earlier interview that I had with Coach Ward, I asked him what uh, why his programs have been so successful in terms of the won/loss percentages over the years. Uh, he stated that uh, one the reasons...his main reason was his assistant coach, Coach Craycraft and that he's always had good assistant coaches and good people to help him out. He said another factor in the success has been in terms of community support. For a town this size, why do you think we have such a phenomenal uh, turnout, year after year, both home and away games, with a large community support?

Dick: Well, one thing that was in our favor from the very beginning, that I've felt that I learned back in the early '30's when I was playing for Ceredo-Kenova, was that our community was the ideal size to have uh, the feeling that uh, that we could work together. We weren't big enough that we were lost among people and athletics that we didn't know. We all knew one another and we grew up together and uh, we only all came from two uh, grade schools and that uh, we all ended up at the same high school. And so it was built up over a period of years. The ball players came right out of the same little leagues and the same Babe Ruth leagues and uh, our athletic plant was sitting on the main highway but no one could go through town and miss seeing where our gym was, seeing where our football field was, seeing where our baseball field was. And so that made it easy and let everyone know uh, if anybody was gonna leave town and go to Huntington, see, they went by and the lights were on and at the

field, so they knew that something was taking place and it wasn't something that was overlooked that they didn't know about. In our community uh, we have always been proud of our coaching staff and uh, it's been a pleasure to support them. As the old slogan up at the...on the Ceredo Bank sign, as you come in, it says we invite you to move here today. And many people have taken that as an invitation and have moved here, knowing that they were welcome, because the sign in the town says that we invite you to move here today and many people have wanted to come here because of the athletic program being as successful. If they had a boy they thought was...had some athletic potential, why, and he was gonna receive good coaching and possibly be with the winning team, why here through the years, I don't think they've ever been disappointed. And the only thing that's kept many, many of 'em not coming here, is that we didn't have more homes available for 'em to live, because I've talked to many people, fellows that had boys playing at Huntington East and over in Ohio, and they wanted to come here and from over at Catlettsburg. And we have gotten many of 'em. Some of our best athletes have been kids that have moved in here from out town. And I think they came here because of the athletic program.

Mike: I'm gonna try to pull this one from memory. I think if memory serves correct, back in the early '60's, uh, the athletic facilities at Ceredo-Kenova were completely re-worked and most of this was done by community support. Could you reflect on this a little bit for us?

Dick: The president. the present president of the Ceredo Bank, Floyd Stark, undertook the project of uh, new stadium at the C-K High School football field. And it was a project of \$40,000 that uh, was all raised by pledges by individuals in both communities. And it was a big project and much of it was done with free labor by individuals that were interested in the athletic program. Now uh, Floyd Stark was the main leader in that and stayed in the background but did a lot of hard manual work as well as supporting it financially and uh, then encouraging other people to contribute to the program. And there were pledges made and uh, it made quite a difference. The money in an athletic program uh, comes, it's mostly the program is mostly for the students. But your...bulk of your money comes from adult tickets because they are anywhere from two to three to sometimes four times the price of a student ticket. And so if you want money, which you always need, you've got to have seats for the adults. Now the kids will go and stand. And if the team's playing, it doesn't matter where they play or how late they play, or uh, how bad the facilities are, they'll go to the game. But adult people want a seat and the fact that they can have a reserved seat helps to make quite a difference in whether they go or not. And I think that Floyd Stark realized this ahead and knew how important it was to have plenty of seats and it made quite a change in the athletic program when he undertook this project and led it all the way to complete success in our program.

Mike: Uh...in your opinion as a businessman in the town, do you think the winning tradition uh, the slogan that we have 'Home of Champions', has been good for the development of both Ceredo and Kenova and why?

Dick: Yes, I think that uh, that has been developed more by Coach Craycraft and Coach Ward in the fact that uh, they've helped to develop it by ever...they never tried to run the score up on anyone. And when it was at all possible, to inject young underclassman into a game, they got 'em in that game and gave them a little experience. And as a result, I have watched many a boy that never started a game until he was a senior but he played with a lot of confidence. Maybe he might have been small and not a lot of ability but he might have been gettin' in the game from the 9th grade on. But just in there for a few plays. But when he was out on that field like he'd been an all-American for the past four years because he wasn't worried--he'd been in the game when he was in the 9th grade. And as a result of this, our kids have...had that instilled in them that they are capable of winning and that they are champions and that they got in a game when they won the state championship, which was maybe 3 or 4 years ago. And it carries over, it carries over until every kid that I think, that each year, well, they've always felt like they were gonna win the state championship.

Mike: Uh, well, a lot of former players that I've talked with and uh, the coal also stressed the fact that he didn't teach so much blocking and tackling uh, all year 'round, 'cause he said you can only play football so long. Uh, but most members of former teams have said that both coaches stressed moral values, a hard work, determination, team effort uh, has uh, do you feel that this is carried over in to the town, that's caused a lot of people to stay in the community and it's helped us out quite a bit?

Dick: Well, definitely so because of the example the two coaches themselves have set...have set before the boys and the community. I mean, they're of good character and they've never been a blotch on their record that would have anyone to...to doubt their honesty, their sincerity about the program or about what they've told kids and uh, as far as I know, they have always stressed to the kids the importance of their studies and have seen that they spend a lot of time studying, as well as playing athletics. And I'm confident that uh, just the two men themselves, what they have done, and even the other individuals that have come in to uh, the program. We've had a lot of uh, uh, young men take their student teaching coaching here. And we've always seemed to have been fortunate to have people that helped the program while they were in the process of learning themselves.

END OF INTERVIEW