

PLAYERS

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Abernathy. All were pitchers and all were from North Carolina. The other two were Talmadge Abernathy (also called Ted) of Bynum and Woody Abernathy of Forest City.

Beginning in 1935, J.K. "Buddy" Lewis played 11 years with the Washington Senators. He made the all star team both as a third baseman and an outfielder. In 1946, Lewis played for the American league in the game, and the other two starting outfielders were Ted Williams and Joe Dimaggio

Lewis compiled a lifetime batting average of .297. He hit over .300 four times and spent three of what could have been his most productive years in the military, flying "The Hump" in Burma.

Kings Mountain's Jake Early had the reputation of being one of the better catchers in the American League. Early played for Washington from

1939 until 1949, with the exception of 1947, when he was with the St. Louis Browns.

"Jake was one of the best catchers around," said Ted Williams in an interview after Early retired. "He could really fire that ball to second base."

Early was noted as the only catcher in the league who had the nerve to toss dirt into Williams shoes when he was batting.

Jimmie Hall, born in Mount Holly and reared in Belmont, enjoyed a successful major league career. Beginning with Minnesota in 1963, Hall played for several teams, including, California, Cleveland, the N.Y. Yankees, and the Chicago Cubs before finishing up with Atlanta in 1970.

An outfielder, he averaged 23 home runs a year for his first five seasons, and tied a rookie record with 33 his first year.

Belmont's Harold Stowe was a long time Yankee farm hand and spent time in New York, although he eventually pitched in just one game. He

was a Casey Stengel favorite.

Most people don't know that Stowe was actually the first player chosen by the expansion N.Y. Mets. When Stengel found out about it he hit the roof and recalled Stowe's name from the draft list.

Many people think Whitey Lockman is a native of Charlotte. Actually, he was born in Lowell. Lockman was a major league star and manager with the New York Giants for many years.

Tony Cloninger, of Iron Station who now resides in Kings Mountain, pitched for 12 years with Milwaukee, Atlanta, Cincinnati and St. Louis. Cloninger, who won 24 while losing 11 in 1965, was also a good hitter, slamming two grand slam home runs in a single game on one occasion against San Francisco.

Tom Wright of Shelby played for a total of nine years with the Boston Red Sox, the St. Louis Cardinals, the Chicago White Sox and the Washington Senators from 1948 until 1956.

There were others from the region who played briefly, or a few years in the majors.

Doyt Morris of Stanley played part of one season as an outfielder for the Philadelphia Athletics in 1937; Billy "Doc" Queen helped the 1957 Milwaukee Braves win the National League pennant by catching one fly ball in the only inning he played in the big leagues; and Howard Moss of Gastonia had cups of coffee with the N.Y. Giants in 1942 and Cincinnati and Cleveland in 1946.

Shelby's Billy Champion spent eight years in the majors with the Philadelphia Phillies and Milwaukee Brewers. He was a right handed pitcher.

George Wilson of Cherryville, Kings Mountain and Shelby played the outfield for the N.Y. Giants, Yankees and the White Sox for three years. He was best noted as a pinch hitter with the Giants.

Buzz Peeler is probably the best known Cherryville pitcher. The little southpaw played for several years as a minor leaguer. Another Cherryville

native, Ralph Roberts, is high on Atlanta's list of prospects.

Rube Melton, a strapping right-hand pitcher with a blazing fast ball, pitched for parts of six seasons with the Philadelphia Phillies and the Brooklyn Dodgers from 1941 until 1947.

Austin "Chink" Outen of Mount Holly spent part of the 1933 season as a catcher with the Brooklyn Dodgers. As an eighth grader at Mount Holly High School in 1917, Outen led the baseball team in hitting.

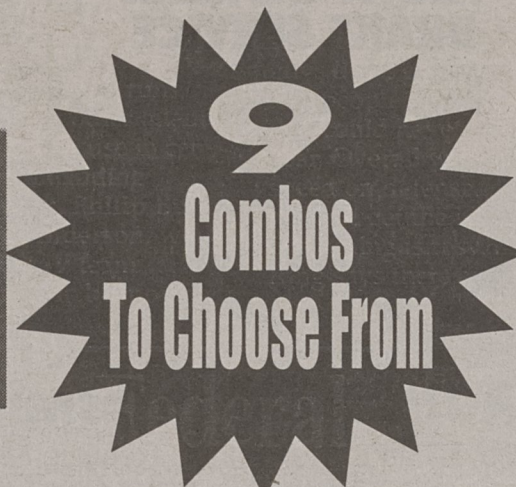
Stanley's Scott Stewart has pitched for several years with Montreal, Cleveland and Los Angeles. He has signed a minor league contract with the Mets for the coming season.

The best known current major leaguer from these parts is pitcher Kevin Millwood of Bessemer City. Millwood will ply his trade with Cleveland in the coming season, provided he is healed from the injury which slowed him down last year.

Millwood won 18 games
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