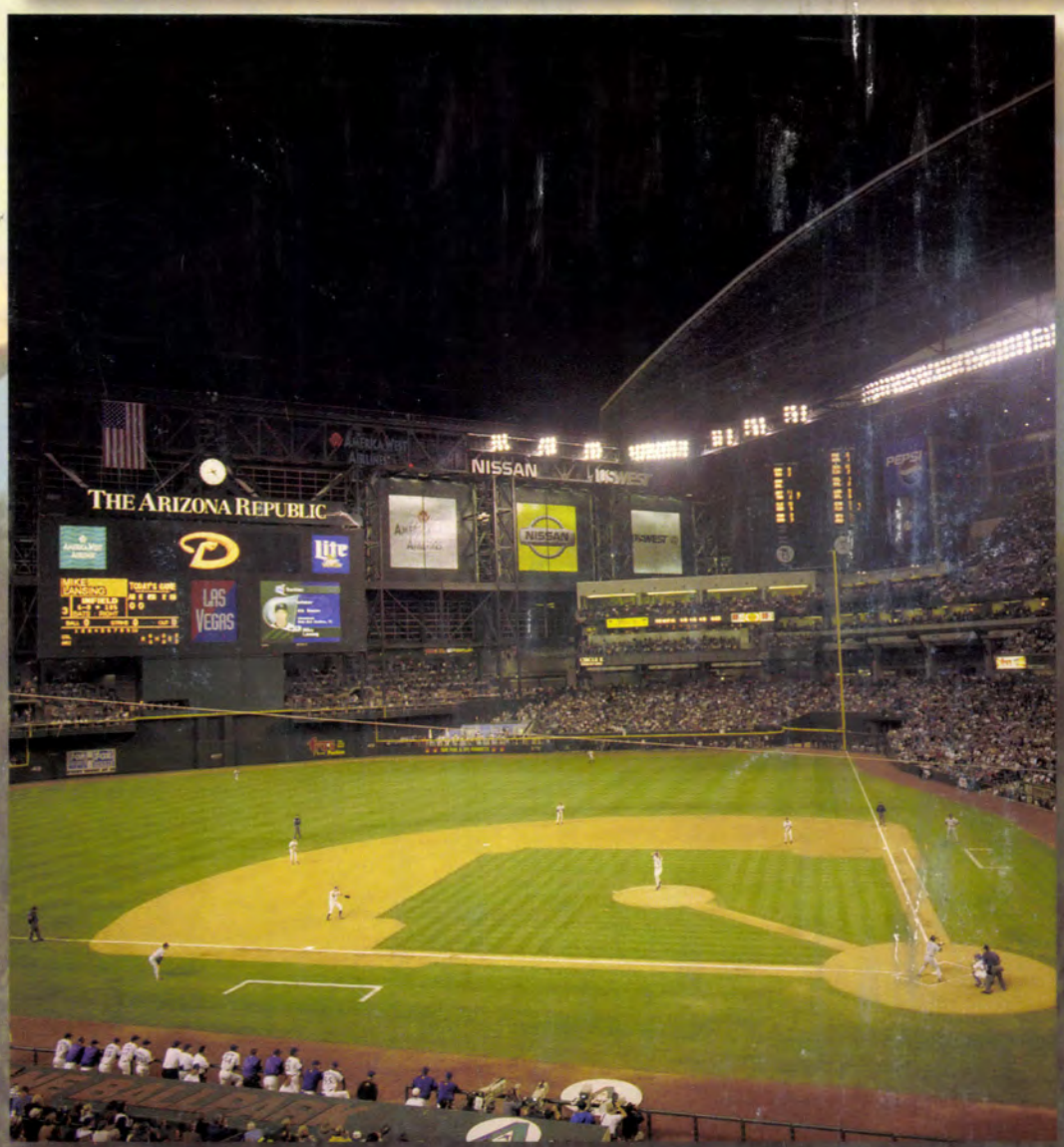
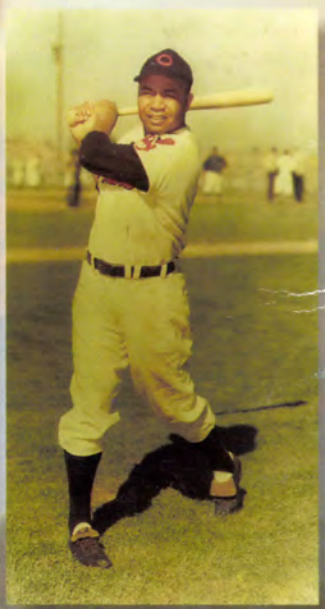
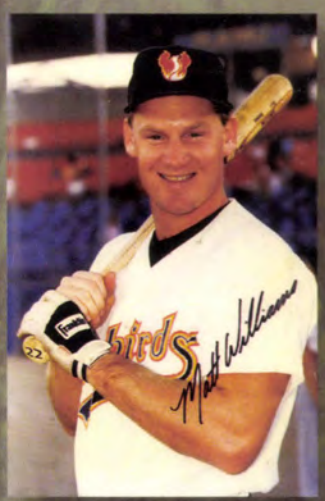
Mining Towns to Major Leagues

A HISTORY OF ARIZONA BASEBALL







On the Front Cover (clockwise):

- A baseball game in Morenci, Arizona being played in the shadow of the copper mines, circa 1910. *Courtesy of History and Archives Division, Arizona Department of Library, Archives and Public Records (97-1492F).*
- Future Hall of Fame catcher Raymond (Cracker) Schalk at Bisbee's Warren Ballpark. The photo was reportedly taken in November 1913 at the first game between two major league teams played in Arizona (the Chicago White Sox and New York Giants met in the southern Arizona mining town during a post-season barnstorming tour). *Courtesy of Bisbee Mining and Historical Society.*
- Cleveland Indians outfielder Larry Doby during spring training in Tucson in the late 1940s. *Photo credit: TV Sports Mailbag, Yorktown Heights, N.Y.*
- Arizona Diamondbacks third baseman Matt Williams, while playing for the Phoenix Firebirds from 1987 to 1989. *Personal collection of Rodney Johnson.*
- Opening Night at Bank One Ballpark on March 31, 1998 at the moment Andy Benes is throwing the first pitch. *Photo credit: Arizona Diamondbacks.*

Above: The Scottsdale sheriff and his posse greet Manager Mike Higgins (center), Jackie Jensen (left) and Ted Williams in front of old Scottsdale Stadium during Red Sox spring training in March 1959. *Photo credit: Boston Traveler.*

On the Inside Back Cover: Team picture of the semi-pro Ray (Arizona) Mines in 1917; and Phoenix Chamber of Commerce map promoting the Valley of the Sun published in *The Sporting News* during spring training in 1952. *Courtesy of The Sporting News Library and Archive, St. Louis, Missouri.*

On the Back Cover: Lee "Flame" Delhi, the first Arizona-born player to reach the majors and the namesake of Arizona's SABR Chapter, in Ray, Arizona in 1916 or 1917.

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MINING TOWNS TO MAJOR LEAGUES: A HISTORY OF ARIZONA BASEBALL (ISBN 0-910137-79-X) is published by The Society for American Baseball Research, Inc., 812 Huron Road E, Cleveland, Ohio 44115.

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Baseball in the Arizona Territory, 1863-1912

by Jeb Stuart Rosebrook, M.A., Ph.D./abd

Baseball in Yuma, Arizona on July 4, 1906.

Photo: History and Archives Division, Arizona Department of Library, Archives and Public Records (97-1958)

Between the founding of Arizona as a territory in 1863, when the nation was in the midst of the Civil War, and 1871, when the nation was in the midst of the Indian Wars of the American West, baseball had been transformed from a gentleman's amateur game to a professional game for the masses with an official league and salaried players. During those eight years the American army fought an active war against Apache, Yavapai, and Hualapai Indians of the Arizona Territory to provide a safer place of opportunity for miners, farmers, ranchers, and settlers. Like other westerners, the men settling Arizona were probably spending their scant leisure time drinking or gambling but they most likely played the occasional "pickup" game at holiday celebrations.

In January 1873, a Prescott paper, the *Arizona Miner* reported one of the first games played in the territory, a Christmas day match at Camp Grant. "In the forenoon, an exciting game of base ball took place. This occupied the attention, [of] both of the combatants, until one o'clock, when the welcome call to dinner was wafted to our ears, and readily responded to." No score or outcome of the game was reported. With the first professional league organized in the East in 1871, and baseball being played in the far corners of the Western Territories, the game of baseball was on its way to becoming ingrained in America's consciousness as the national pastime.

By the time the Apache wars ended in September 1886, two transcontinental railroads had been built through the territory, attracting more American settlers and immigrants from Europe, Asia, and Latin America to seek their opportunity in Arizona. Town boosters, newspaper editors, and moneyed investors promoted the territory and the future wealth of the region. While professional baseball was decades away from being organized in the Southwest, baseball in Arizona would follow New York's evolutionary progression from pickup teams, amateur clubs, and semi-pro squads to professional teams and leagues.

As communities in Arizona Territory developed in the 1870s and early 1880s around mining camps or agricultural centers, baseball became evident in many of Arizona's young communities as a fixture at Fourth of July celebrations and on Christmas Day, or as a leisure activity in mining and military camps. With the heat of the Sonoran Desert dictating much of day-to-day life in the lower elevations of Arizona, early baseball matches in the territory tended to be played in the winter or early spring. Christmas seemed to be an especially favorite day for baseball.

Baseball appears in the records of the early years of Yuma, Prescott, and Phoenix. Yuma was witness to one of the earliest matches with a game played on Main Street in February 1874. In Phoenix, following a Christmas Eve of dancing, celebrating, and feasting, the Norvall Club of McDowell and the Phoenix Club played on Christmas Day 1880, with Phoenix winning 13 to 9. The game was described as "well played by both clubs, and was witnessed by a large audience, many of whom were ladies." A box score accompanied the brief article. The organization of baseball clubs in the youthful burg of Phoenix was fleeting for the following year there is no mention of a baseball match on Christmas Day.

In 1880, Arizona Territory had a scant 40,441 residents, less than half of the 118,430 located in its eastern neighbor, New Mexico. In the West, only Idaho (32,611), Montana (39,157), and Wyoming (20,788) had fewer settlers. As

Baseball team at Fort Whipple near Prescott, Arizona, 1895.

Photo: History and Archives Division, Arizona Department of Library, Archives and Public Records (96-2290P)

Arizona grew in the 1880s, so did the organization of baseball clubs across the territory. Baseball and the creation of local clubs became one of the cultural icons of Americanization in territorial Arizona and baseball teams organized in Prescott, Phoenix, Tombstone, Tucson, and Yuma.

One match in Phoenix in April 1887 appears to have been inspired by a championship series in St. Louis. On April 8, 1887, the *Arizona Gazette* reported that a baseball championship series had begun in the "Gateway City" between St. Louis and Chicago. At the first game over 8,000 kranks (as 19th century fans were nicknamed) were present at the match with Chicago winning 6 to 3.

On April 12, 1887, the *Arizona Gazette* reported that on Sunday, April 10, the Phoenix baseball club, with a number of its players from Ft. McDowell, played Fort Lowell from Tucson at the territorial fair grounds with an audience of around 200 people. Scheduled to begin at two o'clock, a severe wind and sand storm delayed the match for a half hour, and blowing sand remained a problem during the first few innings. The Phoenicians, outfitted with "considerable good material here in ball tossers" defeated the "boys in blue" 14 to 7. At one point in the eighth inning, the crowd, surrounding the field, made so much noise, the local players couldn't hear their coaches' directions and instead of scoring a possible three runs only marked a single tally. The box score reported players' last names, positions played, runs scored, score by innings, and the name of the umpire and scorers.

The excitement which surrounded such a successful match, in which the paper anticipated more games at the Fall fair, ended in tragedy. Three Phoenix players came from Fort McDowell and upon return to their camp on Tuesday morning, one of the men, Muntz, who had played third base, was thrown from his galloping horse, which had slipped on a steep incline after crossing the bridge across the Maricopa canal. The shortstop, Cody, also on horseback and the second baseman Casey and his wife followed in a carriage. Unfortunately, Muntz suffered a terrible blow to the head which proved to be a mortal wound.

From 1890 to 1900, Arizona remained a territory struggling to become a state. For baseball promoters in Arizona, the national pastime remained a very competitive club sport which saw communities around the territory playing each other in popular challenge matches. Professional baseball scores from around the country were regularly published in the newspapers and in most springs, baseball clubs organized around the state. Town leaders issued challenges between

rival communities, usually settling the grudge-match on the Fourth of July. By the end of the decade, however, amateur football had also become popular across the United States, and in Phoenix, football replaced baseball as the traditional game played on Thanksgiving and Christmas.

From 1900 to 1912, baseball in Arizona operated on a semi-pro and amateur level, albeit irregularly. While the major leagues had started spring training on the West Coast in 1903, the Pacific Coast League established new standards for minor league competition in the nation. The national scores were even published on the front pages of Arizona newspapers. In one instance, local baseball clubs held a charity game to raise money for the residents of San Francisco after the devastating earthquake of April 18, 1906. Organized professional leagues, legitimate or outlaw, were infrequent in the Southwest in the first decade of the twentieth century. Local clubs operated in most of the Arizona's towns and they continued to play competitive challenges with inter-city and intra-state rivals.

In 1912, the year of Arizona and New Mexico statehood, every region of the country had a recognized minor league baseball circuit except the youthful Southwest. Leaders of both states knew the importance of baseball to their communities and the national publicity their communities would receive in the nation's papers and pool halls with a minor league in their states. Leaders in Douglas clamored for a professional team but promoters in New Mexico succeeded in joining the first professional league in the Southwest.

The Rocky Mountain League, a "D" class circuit was located along the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains in east-central Colorado. Initially, New Mexico did not have any entries into this ill-fated league, but as teams ran into financial difficulties, the Canon City Swastikas moved their home to Raton, New Mexico on June 4, 1912. The Colorado Springs Millionaires also moved to Dawson, New Mexico, on June 15th. The two other teams, the La Junta Railroaders and the Pueblo/Trinidad/Cheyenne Indians, made up the remainder of the league, which collapsed and folded on July 15, 1912. While unsuccessful in their first venture, New Mexican boosters were ready to try again and so were Arizonans. They would soon receive their second chance when baseball promoter and founder of the Texas League, John McCloskey, conceptualized the Rio Grande Association for the youthful mining and agricultural communities of the Desert Southwest, a "D" class circuit that would begin play in 1915.

Baseball developed into a popular community sport during Arizona's territorial years. As the game developed and established itself in the urban and mining communities of Arizona, baseball became integral to community identity. In the decades following statehood, baseball in the Grand Canyon state would continue to grow in popularity and remain a constant source of rivalry and organized competition.

Jeb Stuart Rosebrook, M.A., Ph.D.Jabd, (Arizona State University), is currently the Research Editor for Arizona Highways *magazine. His three articles and many of the historic baseball photos in this book are adapted from his dissertation, "Diamonds in the Desert: Professional Baseball in the Southwest, 1915-1958."*

Yuma baseball team, 1907.

Photo: History and Archives Division, Arizona Department of Library, Archives and Public Records (97-2198P)

Left:
Old Dominion Mine baseball team, Globe, Arizona, circa 1890.
Photo: History and Archives Division, Arizona Department of Library, Archives and Public Records (96-3645P)

Below:
Tombstone and Bisbee town baseball teams, 1895.
Photo: History and Archives Division, Arizona Department of Library, Archives and Public Records (96-0216P)

Bisbee's Warren Ballpark: America's Oldest?

By David Skinner

A bronze plaque erected by the City of Bisbee in May 1994 proclaims Warren Ballpark in that southeast Arizona municipality as the oldest baseball stadium in Arizona. But Bisbee's boast may be too modest. This classic structure, which was constructed in 1909, may in fact be the oldest ballpark in the United States now being used for its intended purpose—baseball.

Birmingham's Rickwood Field, which was built for the Southern Association Barons in 1910, has laid claim to the oldest ballpark honors. Historian Richard Bak wrote in 1994 that Rickwood is "the country's oldest ballpark." The National Park Service also recognizes Rickwood as the nation's oldest baseball stadium in current use.

Rickwood officially opened in Alabama's largest city on August 18, 1910. The Birmingham Barons occupied the park from 1910 through 1987. Rickwood was also used by the Negro League Black Barons from 1920 through 1960. The park, called "the best Minor League park ever built" by Phillip Lowry in his book *Green Cathedrals*, is patterned after Pittsburgh's Forbes Field and is now owned by the Birmingham school district. Rickwood Field is presently being used by school teams.

But the opening of Bisbee's Warren Ballpark predates Rickwood's by one year. The Warren Company, a subsidiary of the Calumet & Arizona Mining Company, was created in 1907 to develop the "streetcar suburb" of Warren as a company town in the mold of the then-popular "City Beautiful" movement, but without democratic emphasis on citizen participation. As part of that effort, Warren Ballpark—a cast-in-place concrete structure with a wooden outfield fence—was built at a cost of $5,000, opening on June 27, 1909. The ballpark, not coincidentally, was also the last stop on the Warren Company's streetcar line.

Warren Ballpark was considered an immediate success. Warren Company president Colonel Louis W. Powell justified the construction expense for the Warren Ballpark in his 1909 annual report by saying that the park should "meet the demand for a place of amusement and also with the view of increasing the patronage of the electric line."

In its original form, Warren Ballpark was 380 feet at its deepest point. But since being rebuilt in the 1930s by the WPA, the park has featured a 444 foot jag in left center field. Warren's other dimensions are 351 feet from home plate down the left field line, 390 feet to straightaway center and 394 feet to right.

Warren Ballpark has had a long and storied history. Semi-pro, company, and outlaw teams initially used Warren Ballpark. The first regular tenant was the City Beautiful club that was founded in 1908 with support from Warren Company president Powell. The team was organized to compete with similar aggregations representing Bisbee, Douglas, and Benson. In 1926 and 1927, the Bisbee Miners of the Copper League occupied the park. From 1928 to 1955, Warren Ballpark was home to various Bisbee-based professional minor league teams as follows:

Years	League (Level)	Nickname (affiliation)
1928-30	Arizona State (Class D)	Bees
1931-32	Arizona-Texas (Class D)	Bees
1937-39	Arizona-Texas (Class D)	Bees
1940-41	Arizona-Texas (Class C)	Bees
1947	Arizona-Texas (Class C)	Yanks (Yankees)
1948	Arizona-Texas (Class C)	Miners (Yankees)
1949	Arizona-Texas (Class C)	Copper Kings
1950	Arizona-Texas (Class C)	Copper Kings (Dodgers)
1951	Southwest Int'l (Class C)	Copper Kings (Dodgers)
1952-54	Arizona-Texas (Class C)	Copper Kings
1955	Arizona-Mexico (Class C)	Copper Kings

(From 1948-55, Bisbee shared a franchise with nearby Douglas.)

Some of the most memorable highlights of Bisbee's 19 minor league seasons include Bisbee's two disputed championships in 1929 and 1930, and the start of a classic feud in 1947. In 1929, Bisbee squared off against the Miami Miners, a rival mining town about 90 miles east of Phoenix, in the Arizona State League playoffs. Bisbee entered the series with a .667 winning percentage, the best in the minors that year. In the seventh and deciding game of the championship series, Bisbee was leading in the ninth inning when fans in Miami stormed the field stopping the game and a "no contest" was declared. In 1930, the Bees won the second-half Arizona State League title but were again denied a chance to win the championship on the field. Facing a seventh game in the final playoff series, Globe refused to play in Bisbee and the Bees were awarded victory by forfeit and the league title.

In 1947, two Yankee farmhands began what would become a feud that would last for years. The rivalry started when the Phoenix Senators' Billy Martin sought revenge after

The Warren Ballpark during the Bisbee Deportation of July 12, 1917.
Courtesy of the Bisbee Mining and Historical Museum
Below: *The Warren Ballpark as it looks today.*
Photo Credit: Boyd Nicholl

The remaining 1,200 miners were loaded onto 23 cattle cars of the El Paso and Southwestern Railroad, which belonged to Phelps Dodge, another major mining company. The miners were eventually abandoned in the desert near the small New Mexico settlement of Hermanas. Ironically, only intervention by the U.S. Army, which President Woodrow Wilson had refused to allow to intervene in the strike, saved the miners' lives. However, the miners were not allowed to return to Bisbee and, for many years, the city remained divided between mining company defenders and those who sympathized with the strikers.

Phelps Dodge, which absorbed the Calumet & Arizona Mining Company in 1931, still operates in Bisbee, and the failure of the local authorities to mention what became known as the Bisbee Deportation is testimony that the wounds have not yet completely healed.

catcher Clint Courtney of the Bisbee-Douglas Yanks spiked one of Martin's teammates. Retaliatory spiking, a fistfight, and just plain brawling continued throughout the season. The feud lasted into the 1950s when both men played for separate teams in the big leagues.

Many players took advantage of Warren Ballpark's spacious outfield to lead the league in various offensive categories. Native son Clarence Maddern, a future big leaguer, won an RBI crown in 1941. The 1930 and 1931 Arizona State League batting champs, Tony Antista and Johnny Keane, hit .430 and .408 respectively, not only the highest averages in league history, but the highest averages in all of minor league baseball for those years. Antista, whose record was tied by Len Rodriguez of Cananea in 1954, ranks 19th on the all-time Minor League single season batting list.

Interestingly, the most important historical event to take place at the Warren Ballpark has nothing to do with baseball and is not mentioned on the plaque erected by the city. In 1917, the radical Industrial Workers of the World, commonly known as the IWW or Wobblies, called a strike of the miners working in the Bisbee copper mines. The strike was particularly controversial because copper was in high demand for use during World War I. The strike led to a roundup of miners, their sympathizers, and even tradesmen who had done business with them. On the morning of July 12, 1917, a sheriff's posse marched nearly 2,000 people, including three women, to the mining company-owned ballpark, and held them there under armed guard. The women were let go in short order and almost any man who promised to go back to work or could get a "respectable citizen" to vouch for him was released.

As for its intended use, the Warren Ballpark has not been vacant in the nearly forty years since the loss of professional baseball. Baseball and football teams from Bisbee High School and Lowell Middle School use the field, which is now owned by the Bisbee Unified School District. In 1994, Babe Ruth League play commenced at the ballpark. The park is also used for concerts and other special events.

The Warren Ballpark is celebrating its 90th anniversary this year. Recent restoration work assures that the park will continue to stand as a monument to the past while serving as a training ground for the youth of Bisbee. If indeed Warren Ballpark is America's oldest, it should remain so well into the 21st century.

David Skinner lives in Bisbee, Arizona and has been a member of SABR since 1983. He has particular interest in pre-integration black baseball. His articles on Arizona baseball history have appeared in the Bisbee Observer *and* Arizona Baseball Journal.

Prince Hal and His Arizona Odyssey

By Lynn Bevell

In 1923, former major leaguer Harold Homer Chase was chosen to manage the Nogales Internationals, a conglomerate of baseball players from both sides of the United States-Mexico border. Chase, called Hal or Prince Hal in recognition of his talents as a first baseman in the big leagues, continues to be one of most controversial and enigmatic figures ever to play the game. Chase was born in 1883 and grew up in the small town of Los Gatos, California, just outside of San Jose. Some reports say he attended and played baseball at Santa Clara College but the school has no record of his having attended classes there. He joined organized baseball in 1904 as a player for the Los Angeles Angels of the Pacific Coast League, playing his first game on March 23 and going 0-for-3 at the plate. Two years later he joined the New York Highlanders (now known as the Yankees) of the American League. Although he achieved tremendous success in New York, he never lost his close ties to the west.

From 1905 to 1907, Chase returned to California to play for San Jose of the California League after completion of the American League season. Many west coast leagues played well into November and major leaguers ventured to California to play in these circuits. Some played for the extra money and others for the experience. The Cal League was not recognized by the National Commission of Baseball, the official body of Major League Baseball. After the 1907 season, the commission declared any individual playing in the California League would face expulsion from the majors. All of the major league players quickly dropped out except one. Hal Chase refused to conform, changed his name to Schultz and continued to play. It was one of the most poorly kept secrets in baseball and Chase was banned from returning to the major leagues.

The ban did not hold up, however, as Chase petitioned the National Commission to return and was reinstated for the 1908 season. When he returned, the popular Chase was presented with a silver loving cup from his teammates. It did not take Chase long to find himself in trouble again. He began his feud with Kind Elberfeld, the Highlanders' manager, and then, with a month-and-a-half remaining in the season, Chase jumped the New York club for Stockton of the California League vowing that he would never play baseball in the east again. Like many of his declarations, this one was also quickly forgotten. Although the Oakland club offered him $9,000 to play for them in 1909, he declined and quietly returned to New York.

But he could not avoid controversy. In 1910, New York manager George Stallings accused Chase of throwing games. The charges were never proved and Chase replaced Stallings as the club's skipper for the last 14 games of the season. In 1911, Chase's first full season as a manager, the Highlanders finished in sixth place with a 76-76 record. The following year he relinquished the job as manager. His fame was such at this time that during the off-season he acted in a movie, Hal Chase's Home Run.

Chase hit .274 and led the American League in errors in 1912 as the Highlanders finished in last place (50-102). During the 1913 campaign, Hal was traded to the Chicago White Sox. The following season he displayed more of the audacity that was to make him a thorn in the side of organized baseball. The newly organized Federal League offered Chase a contract to play in Buffalo. While Chase was still under contract with Chicago, every contract during that era included a clause that gave management the right to cancel any contract with only ten days notice. Chase, reasoning that what was fair for management was also fair for players, gave the White Sox a ten-day notice and then jumped to the Federal League. Upheld by the courts, Chase played the remainder of the 1914 season and all of the 1915 campaign in the Federal League. He was one of the league's top stars but the league folded after the 1915 season and Chase's rights were traded to Cincinnati. He joined the Reds in 1916.

Prince Hal's first season in the National League was undoubtedly the best of his career. He continued to demonstrate his fielding talents while leading the NL in hitting. Although he played well, Chase again ran afoul of management. This time he took on Reds manager Christy Mathewson, one of the most respected figures in the history of baseball. Mathewson accused his first baseman of dogging it, doing poorly and making money by betting against his team. Mathewson reported the allegations to the NL president John Heydler before leaving for France where he was stationed during World War One. But Heydler cleared Chase of the charges.

In 1919, the New York Giants acquired Chase from the Cincinnati Reds. Before the season was over, Giants' manager John McGraw suspended Chase for "poor play." Whispers

Hal Chase, first baseman, New York Giants, 1919
Photo courtesy of National Baseball Hall of Fame Library, Cooperstown, New York

of throwing games continued to be heard whenever Chase's name was mentioned. He would never play in the major leagues again. When the Black Sox Scandal involving the 1919 World Series came to light in 1920, Chase's name appeared in the document that indicted eight members of the Chicago White Sox. The court sent a subpoena to California but the state refused to extradite Chase and no further action was taken against him. Chase spent the 1920 season with San Jose in a weekend Class D league. In August of that year, the Pacific Coast League banned him from ever again entering a PCL stadium for attempting to bribe a pitcher to throw a game. After playing for various outlaw leagues in California, Chase was recruited and hired by the Nogales Internationals to play first base and manage the club for the 1923 season. The team consisted of players from Nogales, Arizona and Nogales, Sonora, Mexico. The club played its home games in both towns against teams from the United States and Mexico.

Chase was popular in Nogales and was highly successful as a manager. His team beat traditional rivals Tucson and Phoenix, and finished the year with a barnstorming tour of Mexico that began in Sonora and ended in Mexico City. Prince Hal left the ball club at the end of the year but returned to Nogales from time to time.

When the 1924 season opened, Chase was in northern Arizona playing for a team in the town of Williams. It is likely that Hal was given a 'job' at the local Saginaw Manitee Box Company, well known for providing extensive help to the city teams, including giving jobs to key players. Chase only played for about six weeks but during his short time he made a strong impression on the boys of the town. Thomas Way, a local Williams historian, was a junior in high school when he and other boys would go to the baseball field and shag balls so Big Hal could practice batting. Sixty-five years later, Way remembered Chase as one of the nicest men he had ever met.

Chase also impressed his opponents, but he was unable to help the struggling Williams team. After a series with Jerome, he was recruited by the Miners to join their team as player-manager. Jerome was like many of Arizona's small mining towns— baseball was taken seriously. Jerome's arch-rival was the team from Clarkdale, the smelter town five miles down the hill. The rivalry between these two teams was intense and often degenerated into violence. During his first series between Clarkdale and Jerome, the Miners had been humiliated. Chase appeared to be just the cure for the sagging fortunes of the Jerome team. But Williams was not very excited about releasing Chase. Finally, a deal was struck that allowed Chase to go to Jerome. In return for his release, Chase was to come back to Williams to play in the big Fourth of July series against Flagstaff.

Chase kept his word and Williams captured two out of the three games in the annual Independence Day grudge match. With Chase at the helm, Jerome quickly became the powerhouse of the region. In the climatic final series with Clarkdale, the Miners beat the Smelters decisively. The rivalry had reached such a fever pitch that the United Verde Copper Company refused to sanction the two teams for the following season and forced the two towns to field a combined squad. Company employees that were hired to play baseball were let go, including Chase who was accused of pilfering from the stores at his job in the company hospital dispensary. Although the charges were never proved, Chase left Jerome and never returned.

In early March 1925, newspapers reported that Chase was negotiating with the President of Mexico to become commissioner of a new Mexican Baseball League. Chase said he was going to become the "Landis of Mexico," referring to major league commissioner Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis. A follow-up article two days later confirmed that Chase was in direct contact with the Mexican government. This is where the story ends. It is unknown if the discussions were serious or if they were just the product of Chase's vanity, trying to recapture a part of his fleeting fame.

Within two weeks of these strange news releases, Chase entered into negotiations with directors of the Douglas, Arizona team. Douglas, known as the Blues, had been an

occasional member of a loose association of border teams. Teams from Arizona, New Mexico and Texas were represented, as well as clubs from Sonora and Chihuahua. At various times, the league was called the "Cactus League," "Frontier League," and the "Copper League." The quality of play varied from year-to-year but many of the teams had evolved into semi-pro clubs with the players receiving a cut of the gate receipts as well as other benefits, such as a salary or a "job" with a local employer. In 1927, Douglas did not field a team but Chase remained there selling Marmot automobiles at the local dealership. In July, rumors surfaced that the El Paso Giants were recruiting Chase to revive that club's sagging fortunes. After month-long negotiations, Chase was induced to join El Paso. He arrived the second week of August and although he could still hit fairly well, the 44-year-old Chase was obviously suffering from the effects of his knee injury and, after the first weekend, he was quietly dropped from the team. His baseball career was winding down.

Chase returned to Douglas where he lived until returning to California in 1929. His Arizona odyssey, however, was not over. The Williams club brought Chase back in July, 1930 for one last tour. Combining several minor league players and some local recruits with Chase, Williams became the powerhouse of northern Arizona. Over Labor Day weekend, seven teams from the area were invited to play for the Northern Arizona Championship. Chase was named captain and the Williams club swept to the trophy. By the start of the 1931 season, Chase was no longer in the area and had moved on to perhaps Nogales or Tucson. In 1932, he suddenly reappeared in Williams and played in one game. There are reports that he also played in Winslow around this time.

Chase had most likely settled in Tucson by 1933. The 1935 Tucson city directory lists him as a resident with an occupation of "ballplayer." He was still carrying his mitt in his hip pocket and reportedly was seen wandering around town looking for a game. During this period, he drank heavily and was often broke. Tucson resident Roy Drachman remembers Chase asking him for 15 cents to buy a loaf of bread.

Some time in 1935 or 1936, Chase returned to California and lived with his sister in Colusa. Over the final ten years of his life, he suffered from various illnesses including beri beri, a vitamin deficiency often associated with chronic alcoholism. Finally, in 1947 at the age of 64, Chase died. Hal Chase was not a role model. He married twice and had little success as a father. His son has few memories of his father and what he does have are mostly negative. That he gambled, drank and was a womanizer are well known. Moreover, it is likely that Chase bet for and against his own team, and dogged it at times to throw a game.

However, Hal Chase had another side that is more complex. Douglas, Arizona resident Chon Bernal tells of one evening when Chase came to Douglas' Grand Theater smoking his usual big cigar. When someone pointed out a "no smoking" sign to Chase, he loudly announced, "The sign does not apply to me." But a few minutes later when Bernal looked over at Chase, he noticed the bighead had not taken a puff, letting the cigar quietly go out. This was part of the Chase bravado. Perhaps this incident tells us something about Chase's personality as a ballplayer. Perhaps rather than admitting he had booted a ball, he would rather wink and say he missed it on purpose. Perhaps he would rather have people think of him as a colorful player than one whose skills had begun to deteriorate late in his career. Maybe he saw more glamour in being associated with the fast set of gamblers and crooks than being just another fading ballplayer.

After leaving the big leagues, Chase began his Arizona odyssey that lasted twelve years. Although Chase never recaptured the glory of his days in New York, he confidently traveled the bush leagues of the Grand Canyon State as a very big fish in a very small pond. He was undoubtedly drawn to the rough and ready life style that was still prominent in mining towns and the alcohol that flowed freely even during Prohibition. His time in Arizona fluctuated between temporary highs and miserable lows before he finally returned to California as a shell of who he once had been-Prince Hal, king of the first basemen.

Lynn Bevell is a school librarian in Tucson and one of the seven original members of SABR's Arizona Chapter. His research interests include the history of minor league baseball in Arizona and the southwest.

Hal Chase demonstrating his old form in Tucson, 1933.
Photo courtesy of National Baseball Hall of Fame Library, Cooperstown, New York

John Ford Smith: Arizona's Black Baseball Pioneer

By David Skinner

John Ford Smith, the son of a pioneer Arizona family, was a pioneer himself whose baseball career spanned the pre- and post-integration eras, both in Phoenix and nationally. He is the only Negro League player presently known to have been born in Arizona.

Smith was born in Phoenix on January 9, 1919. His father, Charles Smith of Frederick, Maryland, had been a Buffalo Soldier who moved to Phoenix after he was discharged from the Army. Charles married Cora MacKenzie and they raised eight children, two of whom were exceptionally talented athletes.

Commonly known by his middle name, Ford first rose to prominence while attending Phoenix Union Colored High School in the 1930s. Baseball was his starring vehicle. Primarily a pitcher, the right-hander could fill in anywhere, being a good batter and fielder. He was always a hard thrower, but his high school teammate Robert Gerton remembered him as a seven-inning pitcher, needing relief help after that point. The highlight of his high school career was a five-inning no-hitter for the Monarchs.

Since Phoenix Colored High was unable to play against white schools in the Valley of the Sun, the Monarchs found most of their competition from Indian schools such as those in Phoenix, Sacaton, and Casa Grande. Gerton said the six-foot-one Smith also was a good forward in basketball and a "long-passer" in football. Ford's brother Louis was also a sports star who was considered a great basketball player before he died of pneumonia in his late teens. Ford was afflicted with the same malady while a student at Phoenix College, and he suffered recurrently during his professional career.

After college, Smith remained in Phoenix to pitch for the all-Black Arizona Compass team that ran through the 1940 semi-pro district and state tournaments without a loss. Ford starred in two decisive victories over Winslow, striking out 18 in the championship game. His batterymate Tom Gee, the team's best hitter, had played two seasons for the New York Lincoln Giants of the Eastern Colored League in the mid-1920s. Although Compass was eliminated from the National Semi-Pro Tournament at Wichita after two straight defeats, the first to the all-Black Chicago Palmer House team which featured many Negro League stars, Smith was able to use this experience as a stepping stone to a professional career.

In 1941, he joined the Kansas City Monarchs, a club on its way to the third of four straight Negro American League pennants in the year before the resumption of the Negro World Series. The 22-year-old found himself on a veteran pitching staff that included such stalwarts as Satchel Paige, Chet Brewer, Hilton Smith, Little Walker, and Lefty Bryant, as well as developing stars Jack Matchett, Booker McDaniels, and future major leaguer Clifford "Connie" Johnson. In such fast company, Ford was fortunate to find any work, and finished with a 1-1 record.

His prospects looked good but World War II intervened, and Ford left the Monarchs' mound corps for a pitching assignment with the Quartermaster's Corps at Ft. Lewis, Washington. Ford led the team to a 42-2 record and the Washington state semi-pro title. Transferring to the Army Air Force, he rose in rank to lieutenant and reached the pinnacle of his service baseball career when he pitched his European Theatre of Operations team to a 1-0 victory in the 1945 military championship game in London.

The Monarch team that Ford rejoined in 1946 was as strong as the one he had left after the 1941 campaign. The 1946 squad won both halves of the Negro American League and the league playoff. Smith went 4-0 on a staff that again included Paige, Bryant, Johnson and Hilton Smith, along with Amos Watson and Jim "Lefty" La Marque, a mainstay since 1942. In the 1946 Negro World Series, the Monarchs unexpectedly lost to the Negro National League champion Newark Eagles, four games to three. In the Series, Ford started two games (losing his only decision) and played in the outfield in Game Seven.

Ford became one of the team's staff aces in 1947, going 7-2 with a 2.57 ERA in NAL play. The following season, he was the Monarchs' number one starter and compiled a 10-5 record with a 2.64 ERA. Kansas City won the second-half title in 1948 before losing the NAL playoff to the Birmingham Barons.

Like many Negro Leaguers, Ford spent his off-seasons playing winter ball in the Caribbean. In 1947-48 and 1948-49, he led the Puerto Rican Winter League with 13 victories each season for the Santurce Cangrejeros. Along with fellow Negro League stars Bob Thurman, Earl Taborn, Willard Brown, and manager Vic Harris, Ford was a key player on Santurce's first "Escuadrón del Pánico," literally translated as "Panic Squad."

During the winter of 1949-50, Ford pitched for Habana in

Photo Credit: personal collection of David Skinner

the Cuban League. Nicknamed "Teniente" in recognition of his military rank, he was a late addition to a starting rotation that included Negro League star Max Manning and went 8-6 with a 2.80 ERA. Smith also showed his usual prowess with the bat, winning a game for himself in relief with a clutch triple. In the popular Cuban magazine *Carteles*, writer Rai Garcia observed in 1950 that Ford was the most difficult pitcher to hit against in the Cuban League that winter due to his tremendous velocity and varied repertoire. However, Garcia labeled him as only a marginal major league prospect because he tended to lose control under adverse circumstances.

Ford jumped from the Negro Leagues to the New York Giants' organization at age 30 when on January 27, 1949 he signed a minor league contract to play at $700 per month. Along with Monte Irvin, another 30-year-old Negro League veteran, Smith was assigned to the Giants' Triple-A farm club in Jersey City of the International League. As Jersey City's number four starter, Ford compiled a 10-8 record with a 4.15 ERA. During the 1949 campaign, African-American teammates Irvin and Hank Thompson were promoted to the majors but Smith did not get the call.

Ford began the 1950 season with high hopes. There were more black players in the Giants' camp, including aging former football star Kenny Washington. Ford received a raise to $800 per month and was again assigned to Jersey City. But Smith was destined never to cross the Hudson River and play in the Polo Grounds. Although he pitched well enough for Jersey City (2-3, 3.40), he was stricken with pneumonia during the season, limiting him to only 45 innings of work. Smith's days as a Giant farmhand ended after the 1950 campaign when he was not offered a contract for the upcoming season.

The following spring, Smith reported to spring camp with the Seattle Rainiers of the Pacific Coast League. But Smith decided not to sign with the Rainiers because the club tendered him a conditional contract that did not protect him in the event of injury. Instead, he journeyed to Quebec for the 1951 campaign and emerged as the star hurler (16-8, 2.97) for the Drummondville Cubs of the Class C Provincial League.

After an 11-year baseball odyssey, the 33-year-old Smith returned home to play for the Class-C Phoenix Senators of the Arizona-Texas League in 1952. Ford finished with a 13-4 record with a 3.91 ERA in his first year back and tossed a no-hitter against Juarez on August 12, 1952. In 1953, Smith went 11-14 (5.65 ERA) for the last place Senators. He played out the string in 1954, going 9-3 with a 3.56 ERA for El Paso's Arizona-Texas League entry.

While Smith ended his professional career after the 1954 season, he pitched one more year for the predominantly white semi-pro Arizona Cotton Kings in 1956.

Smith had married Senoma Rodgers in 1938, herself the daughter of Arizona Pioneers. Her father George S. Rodgers founded Arizona's first Black-owned insurance agency, and when he was driven from business by his white competitors, he bought and became the second owner of Phoenix's first Black newspaper.

Senoma's mother Myrtle Rodgers was one of the first two Black teachers in Arizona, teaching until Carver High School closed in 1954, bringing an end to the era of "separate but equal" schools in Phoenix. Ford and Senoma had two children, Jacqueline (Garner), who followed in her mother's footsteps by becoming a teacher, and John Ford Smith II, who followed his father's lead by becoming a professional athlete. Young Smith began as a baseball player, but as he grew towards his adult height of six-foot eight he logically migrated towards basketball. He starred at South Mountain High School and played two years at Phoenix College and two more at Puget Sound University in Tacoma. In 1969, the Seattle Supersonics selected him in the 12th round of the NBA draft. When he failed to make the club, Smith joined the Harlem Globetrotters in 1972 and toured with them for nine years.

After his playing career, Ford went to work for the District Office of Phoenix Union High School and served as director of East Lake Park in central Phoenix. He later joined the Arizona Bank and retired as an assistant vice president for human resources. A Republican in the mold of Jackie Robinson, he ran unsuccessfully for the Arizona State Legislature in 1966. Smith was a tireless champion in the struggle for civil rights and served as the executive director of the Arizona Civil Rights Commission.

Ford died in Phoenix on February 26, 1983. He was eulogized in the *Arizona Republic* and *Phoenix Gazette* as a pioneer, an executive, and a civil rights leader; his role in baseball was not emphasized. The *Arizona Informant*, the state's largest Black-owned newspaper, failed to even mention his athletic career. Like Jackie Robinson, his post-baseball participation in the civil rights movement brought him respect and admiration. Perhaps most impressively, he did all of this in his hometown, a city where he had performed some of his greatest feats as an athlete.

A Short Season: Arizona's First Pro Baseball League

By Lynn Bevell

John J. "Honest John" McCloskey, one of the legendary figures of minor-league baseball, was born in 1862 in Louisville, Kentucky, where he began playing semi-pro ball in the 1880s. Primarily a catcher, he soon joined barnstorming teams that toured the midwest and southwest. These journeys led him to El Paso, Texas in 1885, where he joined a ball club sponsored by the local smelter. McCloskey's barnstorming across Texas, and his one season in El Paso, convinced him that the state was ripe for organized baseball; and, during the fall and winter of 1887-88, he and other interested individuals struggled to form a new circuit.

The result was the Texas League of Baseball Clubs which overcame many obstacles during its first season, and indeed, through much of the rest of the Nineteenth Century. But the Texas League, as we now know it, was launched and "Honest John" became recognized as the father of this venerable minor-league circuit.

After the 1892 seasons McCloskey moved to Savannah, Georgia of the Southern League. His career over the next twenty-plus years reads like a geography book. He had stops in places like Butte, Tacoma, Boise, and Vancouver in the northwest; San Francisco, Dallas and Ogden in the west and southwest. In 1895, still in his early thirties, McCloskey took over as manager of the National League team in Louisville, which he piloted for two seasons. A decade later, he served three years at the helm of the St. Louis Cardinals. In all, he managed 30 different teams in a period of 36 years, and his 44-year career in baseball even included service as an umpire.

But perhaps his greatest contribution to the game was his role as a league organizer. McCloskey founded five different leagues during his career, including the first one to bring "organized" baseball to Arizona.

In 1915, after serving for a season as a scout for the Cincinnati Reds, McCloskey returned to El Paso. In addition to being the largest city between Dallas and the west coast, the "Pass City" also had become a hotbed for baseball. As a result, organizing the team, and even committing the city fathers to building a new stadium, proved no problem. Although McCloskey easily gained authorization from the National Association to form the Rio Grande Valley Association as a Class D minor-league, he did have trouble finding enough cities to participate and make the new league viable.

McCloskey needed cities with populations sufficient to support organized baseball. By late March of 1915, he had five such cities seemingly committed to the new league: El Paso, Texas; Albuquerque and Silver City, New Mexico; and Phoenix and Tucson in Arizona. Other possibilities included Bisbee, Douglas and Nogales in Arizona, Roswell, Las Cruces, Lordsburg, and Deming in New Mexico.

As part of his organizational effort, McCloskey sent J. W. Brown, who had recently managed a team in Winnipeg, Canada, to Tucson. Brown moved quickly, securing use of Tucson's Elysian Grove for the home field, and signing as manager Norman C. "Kitty" Brashear, who batted .276 in 110 games as a utility man with the 1902 St. Louis Cardinals. In Phoenix, manager Herb Hester worked with H. Clap Parker and the local chamber of commerce to solidify the franchise in Arizona's capital city. Albuquerque, with management by George Reed and partner Ward Isbell also progressed well; and in Silver City, Ed Markley seemed to be organizing what everybody considered to be another rabid baseball city. But organization of the Bisbee club failed to advance beyond conjecture, so a franchise was established in Las Cruces, under Bill Hurley. McCloskey then announced that he would visit all six cities, as well as Nogales and Douglas, with an eye toward possible expansion to an eight-team circuit.

McCloskey at first had hoped to start the season on April 15th but organizational problems caused several postponements of the starting date. The most unstable franchise was Silver City, where Bill Quigley, a veteran west coast manager, had not yet arrived to run the club. On April 18th, after visiting the New Mexico town, McCloskey was forced to announce that things were not working out there, that Nogales and Douglas were candidates to field the league's sixth team instead, and that (after two prior delays) the season's opening date had been postponed to May 1st. By April 23rd, McCloskey had awarded the sixth team to Douglas, which joined Albuquerque, El Paso, Las Cruces, Phoenix, and Tucson as the league's initial franchises. Organized baseball was poised for its debut in the southwest.

But it also became apparent that the league was not in total control of its teams when Tucson and Phoenix announced that they would open their season on April 27th, rather than the May 1st date set by McCloskey. The contest was played on the earlier date, and Tucson won Arizona's first ever game of "organized" baseball, crushing Phoenix 10 to 2.

The following day, representatives of the six teams met to finalize league rules and operations. Franchise chiefs in attendance included Tucson's Brown, Hester from Phoenix, Reed of Albuquerque, Burt Aaron of Douglas, N. C. Frenger and S. Manassee of Las Cruces, and McCloskey from El Paso. The meeting was chaired by the league's newly elected president, Ernest Hughs. Following a recommendation by the National Commission, the league set a salary limit of $1,200 a month per club, excepting the managers. Concern was high that the league be protected from franchise withdrawals, so each club was required to deposit $600 to insure two week's salaries, and to post a $500 guarantee against withdrawal. The league also agreed to share all railroad fares, and that the proceeds from holiday games were to be pooled and equally distributed. (Imagine that—league management agreeing to a salary cap and revenue sharing, eighty-four years ago!) In order to keep the league solvent, each team also agreed to place 10 percent of all daily receipts into a "sinking fund" to cover payment of umpires and official scorers, as well as upkeep of parks and other details. To maximize revenues, it was agreed that all holiday games would be played in cities that were expected to produce the largest attendance and gate receipts.

John J. McCloskey, founder of the Rio Grande Valley Association, Arizona's ill-fated first pro baseball league
Photo courtesy of National Baseball Hall of Fame Library, Cooperstown, New York

The league also announced its list of officials for the six clubs: Phoenix, W. B. Twitchell as president, and F. B. Lang as secretary-treasurer; Tucson, J. W. Brown as president, A. R. Craig, secretary, and J. R. Ryland, treasurer; Las Cruces, N. C. Frenger, president, L. C. Sexton, vice president, and Gustave Manassee, secretary; Albuquerque, Ed L. Grose, president, N. E. Neff, vice president; El Paso, Maury Edwards, president, A. H. E. Beckett, secretary (N. E. Neff also was listed as El Paso's vice president, and it is impossible to confirm at this time whether he served as an officer for both clubs or this was a redundant typo). The Douglas officials were to be announced later.

On May 1st, Las Cruces began its season at El Paso, with the New Mexico club taking an 8-5 decision. Douglas opened at Albuquerque on May 4th, with the home team taking the first official game played in New Mexico by a score of 9-6. Following the Phoenix-Tucson contest of April 27th, the league was fully operational. By this time the clubs also had adopted nicknames. The Tucson team was known as the Pueblos or the Old Pueblos. Phoenix was called the Senators. Albuquerque, the "Duke City" was, and remains to this day, the Dukes. El Paso took its cue from the manager and called themselves the Mackmen. The Las Cruces club was known as the Farmers. Only Douglas, which was awaiting the winner of a newspaper-sponsored contest to name the team lacked a moniker. The future of professional baseball in the southwest seemed assured.

But the feeling of assurance was to last only nineteen days. On May 25th, the *El Paso Times* reported the "annulling [of] the franchise" of two teams—Las Cruces and Douglas. The primary reasons cited were insufficient capital and the lack of fan support. The *Times* commented that, although Las Cruces had tried, the city was simply too small; but that Douglas, on the other hand, "did not even make an attempt to help the club, according to reliable reports."

The remaining teams reaffirmed their commitment to a four-team league, and began the process of acquiring the best players from the two disbanded teams. It was also agreed to close the book on the first part of the season, and to start again from scratch.

With Douglas and Las Cruces disbanded, the league appeared competitive except for the Tucson club. Phoenix, Albuquerque and El Paso were the better teams at that point. Regardless, a new schedule quickly was thrown together, and the league resumed operations on May 25th (the same day that Douglas and Las Cruces were dropped), with El Paso knocking off Tucson 8 to 7, and Phoenix beating Albuquerque 7 to 3.

The league appeared to have gained a measure of stability, and the rest of the schedule for May and June was completed. To read the newspaper accounts, all seemed well with the league. Phoenix and El Paso dominated in the win column; Albuquerque struggled somewhat, and dropped to around .500 ball; and Tucson continued to be the league doormat. El Paso was the strongest-drawing city, as would befit the largest metropolis in the circuit. Using the league's

holiday guidelines, the July 4th match-ups featured Albuquerque visiting the larger city of El Paso, while Tucson met its rival at Phoenix.

But the holiday schedule was tinged by controversy. In mid-June, during a game against El Paso, Phoenix catcher Byrd Lynn had struck umpire Harry Kane with a bat. The league ordered that Lynn be suspended for three games and fined him $50. Lynn served the suspension, but the fine was never paid. Phoenix manager Herb Hester put Lynn back in the lineup for a late-June series against Tucson. Then, after several "heated" telegrams, Hester held Lynn out of the July 4th double header, which Phoenix swept anyway. But the league determined that Phoenix would be required to forfeit "at least five games" to Tucson.

The controversy over Lynn's suspension became moot after the games of July 5th. That day, Tucson took the first game of a double header against Phoenix by a score of 13-5, but dropped the second 6-1. El Paso and Albuquerque also split, with the Mackmen winning the opener 6-0, but losing the second game, 5-2. In the same newspaper that reported the scores, the headline read: "Rio Grande Baseball Quits Business; Officials Plan Re-opening in Spring of 1916."

Money proved the root of the league's problem. The *El Paso Times* reported that of the four teams, only El Paso was not losing money, but that they were not making money either. The paper also charged that Phoenix and Albuquerque both had exceeded the league salary cap by spending as much as $2,000 a month. In *The Sporting News*, McCloskey was reported as noting that transportation was the league's biggest problem. He said that the railroads insisted on charging four cents per mile, a price, given the league's great distances, the teams could not afford. Always the optimist, however, McCloskey also stated that the league had received permission from the National Association to reserve the area for play in 1916, and he felt that baseball could still make a go of it there.

But organized baseball did not return to the area until 1928, when Tucson, Phoenix, Bisbee, and Miami formed the Arizona League. El Paso saw no more organized ball until 1930, when the city also joined the Arizona League. Albuquerque eventually entered the Arizona-Texas League in 1932. All of these cities but Bisbee and Miami have professional baseball today.

Douglas did not gain another franchise until 1947, when it shared a team with Bisbee in the Arizona-Texas League. That club survived for seven seasons, then joined the Arizona-Border League in 1955. In 1956, Douglas finally gained a team of its own in the Arizona-Border League, which survived for three seasons until the League's demise in 1958. Sadly, Las Cruces never again fielded a team in "organized" baseball, and has suffered the indignity of being thus far omitted from the Baseball Hall of Fame display of teams.

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Arizona in the Minors—1915 to the present

Arizona's Minor Leagues

Arizona: Rookie (short-season complex), 1988-present
Arizona-Mexico League: Class C, 1955-58
Arizona State League: Class D, 1928-1930
Arizona-Texas League: Class D, 1931-1932, 1937-1939; Class C, 1940-1941, 1947-1950, 1952-1954
Pacific Coast League: Class AAA, 1958-59, 1966-present
Rio Grande Association: Class D, 1915
Southwest International League: Class C, 1951
Sunset League: Class C, 1950

Arizona's Minor League Cities

Bisbee: 1928-1932, 1937-1941
Bisbee-Douglas: 1947-1955
Douglas: 1915, 1956-1958
Globe: 1929-1931
Globe-Miami: 1947-1950, 1955
Mesa: 1929, 1947
Miami: 1915, 1928-1930
Phoenix: 1928-1932, 1947-1959, 1966-1997
Tucson: 1928-1932, 1937-1941, 1947-1958, 1969-present
Yuma: 1950-1952, 1955-1956

The Arizona State League of 1929

By Jeb Stuart Rosebrook, M.A., Ph.D./abd

Globe Bears pitcher Thornton Lee went on to pitch 16 seasons in the Major Leagues. He is pictured here in 1948—his final season with the New York Giants.
Courtesy of National Baseball Hall of Fame Library, Cooperstown, N.Y.

The Arizona State League, a D-Class minor league, was entering its second year when it expanded from four to six teams in the winter of 1929. The year before, promoters of baseball in Phoenix likened Opening Day of the Arizona State League to the chaos and excitement of warfare, "War in China, Revolution in Nicaragua, bandits in Mexico, gang war in Chicago-mere firecrackers in the jaws of the mighty cannon that will sound throughout Arizona today." Indeed, two new teams for the Arizona State League meant increased baseball competition. The addition of the Globe Bears and the Mesa Jewels to the existing teams of the Bisbee Bees, the Miami Miners, the Phoenix Senators, and the Tucson Cowboys, ensured that the league would have enough teams to crown both first- and second-half champions, and hold a post-season playoff.

An outgrowth of Arizona's semi-pro and outlaw leagues of the late teens and early twenties, the Arizona State League had successfully met the requirements of the National Association of Baseball Leagues and had financially succeeded in 1928, where the 1915 D-Class circuit, the Rio Grande Association, had failed. As a D-Class league, it had the lowest classification in the National Association. Each club was required to post a $3,000 bond to assure players' salaries, team debts, league dues, and obligations to the National Association. The teams had a salary cap of $2,500 (exclusive of the manager), and there was a limit of 14 players per team. To avoid late-season roster "stacking," clubs were forbidden from adding any new players within 30 days of the end of the season without permission from the league president. Head umpires were paid $10 a game while the base umpires earned $7.50.

After the six Arizona State League teams posted their bonds and local organizers assured stockholders that teams would be organized, the clubs began to construct their squads. The Bisbee Bees retained manager Roy "Hardrock" Johnson, while the Miami Miners got a new manager in Drap Hayes. Phoenix picked up Ross Lyall to manage the Senators and Tucson's manager became Tom Holley in 1929, when the Tucson club also changed their name to "Cowboys" from the "Waddies," a less common nickname for cowpunchers. The new Globe club hired pitcher George "Mickey" Shader as a player-manager, while the Mesa Jewels hired Bill Whitaker.

The six ballparks in the Arizona State League had "grandstands made of wood, each with a capacity of a couple thousand fans, with box seats selling for fifty cents, general admission a quarter, and on Friday nights at the Phoenix Senators games, ladies were [admitted] free." Tucson's Randolph Park, now known as Hi Corbett Field, had the only grass field in the league. The other teams played on "scratch" diamonds of gravel and sand, which the players had to rake and groom themselves. At School Hill Park in Globe, the players were kept so busy at hauling rocks off the field, they sponsored a local day for fans to help out.

The story of the Globe Bears is particularly interesting. The team was named for an orphan bear cub someone gave to Manager Shader before the beginning of the season. But

unofficially, the Bears called themselves the "League of Nations" because after Shader was hired, he began to assemble a team from the rich baseball fields of California.

The ethnicity of the players on this one team was expansive: Irish, Italian, French, German, Mexican, English, Hawaiian and Native American backgrounds were represented by players. The roster included left-handed pitcher Thornton Lee, a 22-year-old from Sonoma; Eulagio "Speed" Lugue, a White Sox prospect; Arthur Garibaldi from San Mateo's club; Thomas Sullivan from Napa; and James McEacher, a Santa Cruz outfielder. Later, Shader signed future big leaguer Tony Frietas, PCL great Henry Oana, nicknamed Prince for his Hawaiian heritage, and others, including Angelo Grilli, Jack Costa, Bill Farrell, John Bordes, and Jimmy O'Connell. Most of these players were first-generation Americans.

Former Arizona Governor Rose Mofford, herself a native of Globe, believes that baseball played a strong role in bringing together these diverse ethnic populations. She has strong memories of "the games starting in time for shift changes at the mine, and the miners, still carrying their lunch buckets, coming straight from their shift to the game." With their tickets to the game, those hard-working miners helped support the teams.

Despite the salary cap, the players themselves earned extra money. Recruited from the San Francisco Seals training camp in California by Globe manager Mickey Shader, the late Thornton Lee (in an interview conducted in the spring of 1989) related that his salary was augmented by the booming local mining company from $250 to $350, as copper mill owners were eager to pay extra for quality players.

Players also earned extra money for driving the team's road car. The Globe team had a Cadillac, with the baseball gear strapped to the side and a canvas top that flapped in the wind. Traveling the graded, oiled highways of 1929 Arizona, Lee said, "you were really skipping the dew" when you hit 35 or 40 miles per hour. When the car would blow a tire or get stuck in the mud of an arroyo, the team members would pull out .22 rifles and pick a target in the desert to bet money on who could get closest to the center of the target. The winner got the jackpot. Home runs could also earn players some extra cash when they collected tips from the appreciative audience who had also been gambling amongst themselves.

The diversity of weather conditions often made Arizona State League games interesting. Night baseball was not possible until lights were installed in Phoenix in 1931. During twilight double-headers at Riverside Park, then located near the bottom of the Salt River in central Phoenix, pitchers changed their flannel jerseys every inning, hanging one to dry while wearing the other in stifling triple-digit heat. Once, when the temperature in Phoenix hit 118 degrees, Frietas and Lee pitched a double-header that went 13 innings.

Sometimes it was not the heat that affected the game, but the desert wildlife. During one game in Tucson, outfielder Tony Borajo had to kill a rattlesnake in left field with a fungo bat.

The 1929 Arizona State League season began on April 11 and ended on September 8. The six-team circuit enjoyed a great deal of support around the state and competition was fierce for the first-half title. The split-season, a 1928 innovation, gave the teams the ability to play throughout the summer and to allow for "pennant races" to entice interest on the part of the fans.

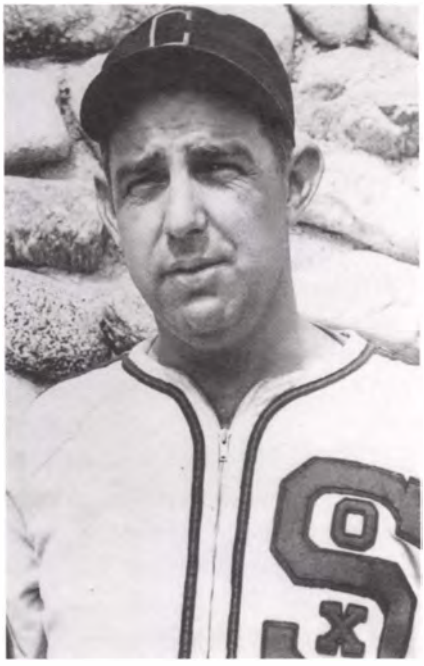
In the first half, the Miami Miners took the flag and opened the door to a consequence-filled second half that left only five teams in the league. On the 24th of July, the Mesa Jewels, with a 20-38 record, reported to the league president that the club was insolvent and was unable to complete the season. The Jewels, who had been financially supported by the Junior Chamber of Commerce, had the most trouble raising the money for their initial bond. They were now failing at the box office. The town's economy was agricultural, and in contrast to the mining towns, there was a lack of fan support. In addition, the summer heat caused a slump in ticket sales. With debts totaling close to $2,000 and assets of only $600, the league president accepted the return of the franchise charter.

This caused the remaining five teams to undergo a scheduling change—for the rest of the season, one team per week would remain idle. In addition, the five teams were awarded three victories and a single loss for each series the Jewels had scheduled.

In the last two weeks of the season, the Globe Bears lost the second half title to the Bisbee Bees. The Bees and the Miners then met in the first Arizona State League Championship, a series that would be both memorable and bizarre. The first six games were hard-fought battles, with each team winning three a piece, which set up a deciding game at Miami's Association Park.

During the championship game, the score seesawed back and forth through eight innings, with Miami leading 13-6. As darkness fell, Bisbee brought the score to 13-12. Held scoreless in the bottom of the eighth, the umpires allowed the game to continue, even though it was too dark to play. The yelling from the stands had begun in the seventh inning—the miners of Miami began to call for an end on account of darkness. In the top of the ninth, when the Bees hit back-to-back home runs in the dark to take the lead, the miners sent seat cushions raining down on the field, inciting a riot.

Thus, the first championship game of the Arizona State League was never completed. Both teams claimed the crown, and appealed to league president Fred Joyce. Joyce ruled "no



Thornton Lee with the Chicago White Sox in 1941.

Courtesy of National Baseball Hall of Fame Library, Cooperstown, N.Y.

contest," which, on further review by the National Association, remained the final ruling.

Despite Globe's third-place finish in 1929, four members of the club—Lee, Frietas, Garibaldi and Oana—went on to play in the Big Leagues. Thornton Lee had the best career of them all, pitching 16 years in the majors for the Cleveland Indians, Chicago White Sox and New York Giants.

But Lee never forgot his baseball roots in Globe. He married a local woman and lived in Phoenix during the off-season. His son Don starred as a pitcher at the University of Arizona and later went on to a major league career himself.

As we reflect on this long-forgotten team playing America's game in the mining towns and desert cities of Arizona seventy years ago, the reality and primitive conditions are unimaginable for most of us. However, a look back provides us with a window into a time when the professional game was still played for pride and for community. Compared to today's players' salaries and modern ball parks, the D-Class appears to be in the Dark Ages.

In reality, the squads of the Arizona State League paved the way for the professional game of baseball in Arizona and throughout the West. Old time players would hardly recognize today's professional game, especially the modern stadiums like Bank One Ballpark, with its rock music, air conditioning, swimming pool, brewery, retractable roof, interactive game sites, video monitors, luxury suites, electronic scoreboards and grass field. A grass field, oh what the "League of Nations" team would have given for a grass field in School Hill Park in 1929.

Arizona Minor League Notes

• Since the Pacific Coast League's move to Tucson in 1969, that franchise has been affiliated with six different major league organizations: Chicago White Sox (1969-72); Oakland A's (1973-76); Texas Rangers (1977-79); Houston Astros (1980-1996); Milwaukee Brewers (1997); and Arizona Diamondbacks (1998-present). In contrast, the Phoenix Giants/Firebirds were affiliated with the San Francisco Giants for 32 consecutive years.

• For its first 29 seasons, Tucson's PCL club was called the Toros. In 1998, the franchise's name changed to Sidewinders as part of the new affiliation with the Arizona Diamondbacks' organization.

• The Tucson Toros captured the PCL championship in 1991 and 1993. Center fielder Kenny Lofton spearheaded the attack for the '91 club with 17 triples, tops in minor league baseball that year. The 1993 title-winners were led by PCL batting champion Jim Lindeman (.362) and runner-up Mike Brumley (.353). Second baseman James Mouton hit .315 with 16 home runs and 40 stolen bases, and was named the Pacific Coast League's Most Valuable Player in '93.

• The Phoenix Giants earned a spot in the Pacific Coast League record book on July 6, 1974 for most home runs by one club in a game by belting ten home runs at Sacramento's Hughes Field. The setting was conducive for a long-ball barrage—the field was a horseshoe-shaped football stadium and the left field fence was a mere 231 feet from home plate with a forty-foot screen. Glenn Adams clubbed three round-trippers, Horace Speed added two, and Skip James, Jeff Mason, Jimmy Howarth, Mike Sadek and Glenn Redmon also joined the homer parade. The record includes a double asterick in the PCL record book because Official Baseball Rules prescribe a minimum outfield distance of 250 feet.

• The Phoenix Firebirds saved their best for last. In the 1997 final season in Phoenix, the club finished with a 88-55 record and had best winning percentage (.615) in the franchise's 34-year history. Phoenix's second-half winning percentage (.690) was the PCL's second best mark since the league went to split seasons in 1979.

The Phoenix Giants' First Campaign

By Charlie Vascellaro

It was a familiar scenario; a city becomes "Big League" and its beloved minor league franchise is quickly and quietly ushered out of town. Phoenix's Triple-A ballclub was forced to relocate to Fresno when the Arizona Diamondbacks debuted in 1998, ending over fifty years of minor league baseball in the Valley of the Sun.

Forty years had passed since the arrival of Pacific Coast League baseball in Phoenix. Known as the Phoenix Giants and more recently the Phoenix Firebirds, the minor league affiliate of the San Francisco Giants originally landed in Arizona under the same auspicious circumstances that forced its removal. In 1958, when New York's National League franchise (the Giants) embarked on its westward move, the San Francisco Seals, at the time an affiliate of the Boston Red Sox, were left without a harbor. So the club sprouted wings and took flight for Phoenix.

But before the relocation to Phoenix, a deal was struck transferring the Seals affiliation from the Red Sox to the Giants while the Red Sox would receive a franchise in Minneapolis. Consequently, just about the entire Seals roster moved to Minnesota, with the exception of Sal Taormina.

Affectionately known as "Hog Head" (he had an oversized head, like a bobbin' head doll), Taormina made the move with the Seals to Phoenix and is the only link between the 1957 and 1958 clubs. Taormina was a utility outfielder, who was as much a coach and cheerleader for the team. Taormina hit .288 with 11 doubles, three home runs and 36 RBI with 139 at-bats in 71 games for the '57 Seals. In 1958, he hit .266 with five dingers and 37 RBI in 99 games, while swapping time between first base and the outfield.

"He had a great personality," recalls Bay Area baseball historian Dick Dobbins. "Everybody looked up to him and he was thoroughly enjoyed. As a veteran [he had been with the club as far back as 1946], he was the kind of guy who could provide guidance," Dobbins said.

Adopting its namesake from the parent club, the Seals transformed into Giants upon arrival in Phoenix. There were new uniforms and new players in them, and the 1958 club included a diverse mix of future big leaguers and aging veterans who had already been there.

Phoenix's first Triple-A entry did not exactly burst out of the gate in its inaugural home opener on April 15, suffering a 10-9 loss at "old" Phoenix Municipal Stadium at the corner of Central and Mohave. Chalk it up to Opening Day jitters that the team blew an 8-0 lead in front of 4,065 fans.

However, the team's undeniable talent soon emerged and before long the first Phoenix Giants club was on its way to a still-standing club record, 89 victories and just might be the best team in franchise history.

John "Red" Davis was the team's first skipper, now 83 and retired from baseball and Dalmatian breeding, fondly recalls the 1958 club. "They had a little of everything, good pitching, good power and good defense, that'll win ball games," Davis says. "We had a hell of an infield, Dittmer (John, 2B), McCovey (Willie, 1B), a big kid, English, from the Bahamas (shortstop Andre Rodgers), and Prescott (George, 3B) who also played in the outfield."

Slugging shortstop Rodgers probably had the biggest numbers on a seriously offensive-minded team. Rodgers led the league with a .354 batting average (the highest ever by a Phoenix player), 295 total bases and 43 doubles. He also blasted 31 homers and drove in 88 runs. Rodgers would toil in the big leagues for 11 years, earning a starting spot at shortstop with the Chicago Cubs from 1962-64.

Dittmer hit .315 with 46 RBI in 109 games, while anchoring the second base position for most of the season. Phoenix was actually the end of the line for Dittmer who had played second base with Milwaukee and Boston in the National League for five years, as well as a one-year stint in Detroit.

Panamanian-born Prescott was an integral part of the team, hitting .309 with 24 home runs and 96 RBI, while playing 75 games at third base and 58 in the outfield. Prescott had another great year at Phoenix in 1959, but lasted only 12 major league at-bats with one hit for the Kansas City Athletics in 1961.

Future Hall of Famer McCovey hit .319 with 14 HRs, 89 RBI, and 168 hits in 144 games. "Stretch" was just loosening up: the following season he would hit a whopping .372 and lead the PCL with 29 dingers and 92 RBI.

The outfield consisted of both future and former big leaguers: Felipe Alou, (brother of Matty and Jesus, father of Moises; 17-year big leaguer, and current manager of the Montreal Expos) hit .319 with 13 HRs and 42 RBI in just 55 games in Phoenix.

Leon Wagner hit .318 with 17 long balls and 58 RBI in 58 games. "Daddy Wags," 12 years in the majors saw him split time with six teams.

The Phoenix Giants climaxed their first season as a member of the Pacific Coast League by winning the championship. Members of the pennant-winning Phoenix club: Front row, left to right: Art Ruane, equipment manager; Leo Hughes, trainer; Andy Silverman, batboy; Joe Margoneri, Marion Fricanlo, Glenn McMinn, Frank Funk, Dusty Rhodes. Middle row: Jim Finigan, Dan Taussig, Sal Taormina, player-coach; Red Davis, manager; Bobby Prescott, Dom Zanni, Joe Amalfitano, Jake Jenkins. Back row: Andre Rodgers, Bill Wilson, Joe Shipley, Jack Dittmer, Curt Barclay, Pete Burnside, Tom Haller, Willie McCovey.

Photo courtesy of The Sporting News Library and Archive, St. Louis, Missouri

World Series hero of yore (1954), Dusty Rhodes drove in a PCL-leading 100 runs with 26 big flys and a .269 average in 132 games. And William Wilson hit .304 with 14 home runs as the team's fourth outfielder.

At catcher was young Tom Haller, a 20-year-old about to embark on a 12-year major league career as a starter behind the plate, first for the S.F. Giants and later with the L.A. Dodgers. Haller would be the National League's starting catcher in the 1967 All-Star Game. Davis took an immediate liking to his backstop. "Haller was right out of college. He surprised me by hitting 16 homers," Davis says.

"I almost got fired over Haller. We had a three-game lead with three to go and I put in Haller to pinch hit in a game we were down by 3-2 in the 9th inning. He struck out and the next morning I got called into the front office. [GM Rosie Ryan] said, 'Next time you use Haller as a pinch hitter you're fired.' It happened again the next day, except he hit a grand slammer. I went to the office the next day, they never said a thing," Davis remembered.

Four Phoenix starters finished the season with double figures in the victory column. Davis called Dom Zanni and Curtis Barclay his aces and indeed the duo proved to be the staff's workhorses with Zanni hurling 201 innings and Barclay chucking 161. Zanni struck out 156 hitters and posted a 3.67 ERA en route to a 14-11 record. Barclay was 12-8 with a 3.91 ERA. Gordon Jones (13-7) and Peter Burnside (11-7) rounded out the rotation. Spot starter Ernie Broglio contributed a valuable 8-1 with 87 strikeouts and a 4.09 ERA in 110 innings.

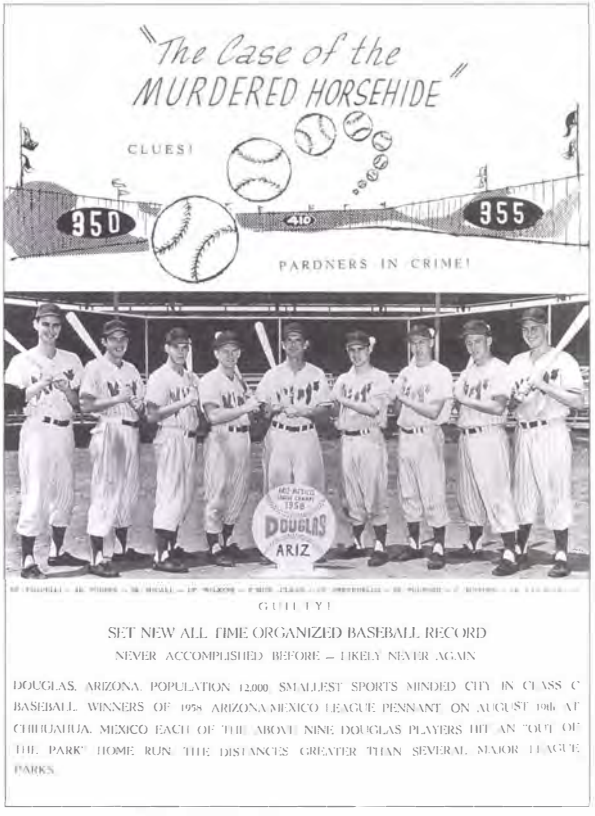
The resident loon in the bullpen was Joe Shipley. "Joe Shipley was my relief man," remembers Davis. "Boy he was a wild son of a bitch. I brought him with me from Mayfield [class D ball in Kentucky]. Rosie Ryan didn't like him one bit, he thought he was crazy, he was just a lot of fun, that's what he was, a side-armer who could throw it hard," Davis says. Shipley was 5-2 with a 2.45 ERA in 42 games, and led the league with 11 hit batsmen.

The '58 Phoenix Giants moved into first place on July 30 and never looked back, owning the top spot until they clinched the flag on September 5. The members of the championship club each received a PCL Championship ring and $300 as a reward for the first place finish.

Charlie Vascellaro is currently the Media Relations Director for Maryland Baseball. L.P., the owner of three minor league teams in Maryland.

"Murdered Horsehide"

By Mike Holden



Courtesy of The Sporting News Library and Archive, St. Louis, Missouri

On August 19, 1958, the Douglas Copper Kings of the Class-C Arizona-Mexico League recorded a home run feat never before accomplished in organized baseball—the Copper Kings hit nine home runs and every player in the line-up contributed one roundtripper.

In the record-setting contest, Douglas faced the Chihuahua Dorados in Cuidad Delicias, a small town about 50 miles southeast of Chihuahua, Mexico, before a slim crowd of 614. The Copper Kings connected for single home runs in the second and third innings, two in the fourth and four in the seventh. When catcher Dick Binford came to the plate for Douglas in the eighth inning, he was the only player who had not gone deep but he smashed a homer to secure his team's place in baseball history.

The nine home run hitters for Douglas were Don Pulford, ss; Andy Prevedello, cf; Ron Wilkins, lf; Frank Van Burkleo, 1b; Luis Torres, 2b; Fred Filipelli, rf; Darrel McCall, 3b; Rich Binford, c; and Manager Bob Clear, p.

Douglas won the slugfest, 22-8. In addition to the homers, the Copper Kings collected 14 other hits, with Wilkins pacing the attack with a six-for-six performance. Douglas scored in all but one inning. Blanked in the sixth frame, the Copper Kings came back to score six runs in the seventh. The game was stopped after eight innings because of darkness.

Bob Clear, who was the Copper Kings' starting pitcher and manager in the contest, still works in pro baseball as the Anaheim Angels' roving special assignment instructor. In an interview a couple of years ago, Clear described the 1958 event as "just one of those things that happens in baseball."

When reflecting on Douglas' accomplishment, you would think that a homer from the pitcher's spot in the order would be the most difficult to get. Clear did recall that he hit his home run in the middle innings and he was happy that setting the record did not rest on his shoulders late in the ball game. But Clear, who played minor league baseball for 19 years, had demonstrated some power that season by belting four home runs in 119 at bats. Looking back, Douglas' most unlikely home run hitter that afternoon was left fielder Ronnie Wilkins, who connected for only two roundtrippers in 46 games.

The Douglas and Tucson newspapers the following day wrote that the Copper Kings' performance set "what is believed to be a minor league record." That claim has continued to be asserted over the next forty years and it appears no one has ever found another professional game where Douglas' feat of "nine homers by nine different players" had ever been accomplished.

While nine players hitting home runs is clearly a "once-in-a-century" oddity, the Copper Kings' 22-run offensive barrage on August 19 was not overly surprising considering that the Arizona-Mexico League was a hitter's league in 1958. In fact, a brief article in *The Sporting News* on August 27, 1958 describing Douglas' accomplishment pointed out that "slugfests are a frequent occurrence in the Arizona-Mexico League." The overall league batting average that season was .302 and the circuit's most potent offensive club—the Nogales Mineros—batted .317 with 157 home runs and 924 runs scored, a average of 7.7 runs per contest.

Douglas went on to win the Arizona-Mexico League title in 1958 by two games over second-place Tucson. The Cooper Kings finished with a 68-52 record. But 1958 proved to be the final year for the Arizona-Mexico League and for minor league baseball in the small mining town of Douglas, Arizona.

Matt Williams' Four-Homer Night

By Steve Gilbert

Matt Williams has had many highlights in his baseball career.

There were the two World Series appearances, the selections to four All-Star Games , and four Gold Glove Awards, just to name a few.

The most memorable moment of his professional career though took place on May 25, 1988 while he was a member of the Triple-A Phoenix Firebirds. That night, Williams hit four home runs in four consecutive at bats to tie a Pacific Coast League record.

Photo courtesy of The Arizona Historical Society, Central Arizona Division (1997.302.01)

While the achievement happened 10 years ago and miles away from the bright lights of the big leagues, the memory was still fresh in Williams' mind when he was asked about it this past spring.

"It was something that you never forget because it just doesn't happen that often," the 33-year-old said.

When Williams reported to the ballpark on that Wednesday back in 1988, there was little in the way of clues that it would turn into a big night for him. He had hit just one home run that season for the Firebirds and in fact, the team itself had gone six consecutive games without a homer and had hit just two in the past 11 games. Williams didn't feel any different during pre-game batting practice and after his first at bat, things didn't look particularly promising.

"I struck out with the bases loaded my first time up on three pitches," he recalled with a smile. "But, what started out as a real bad day though turned into a real good day."

It certainly did.

In the fourth inning, Williams hit Bill Krueger's first pitch over the left field fence. He led off the fifth inning with another solo homer, this one off reliever Ron Mathis that gave the Firebirds a 6-3 lead.

The Dukes were keeping pace with Phoenix that night and when Williams hit his third solo homer of the game, it tied the score at 7-7.

Ironically, the man who put the Firebirds up for good in the game was reliever Roger Samuels, who singled up the middle in the bottom of the seventh to put Phoenix up 8-7.

The score of the game was secondary because Williams had one at bat left. When he went to the plate in the bottom of the eighth, he admitted he was thinking "home run."

"It creeps in your mind, sure," Williams said. "You don't want it to because it messes with you. You don't want to think about home runs because it gets you in trouble. But, if you have three, yeah you want the fourth one. No one said much to me on the bench before the at-bat, it's almost like somebody is throwing a no-hitter. You don't want to jinx him or get into his head."

Williams was his usual modest self after the game, telling reporters, "I saw some good pitches to hit tonight. The guys on the bench said I was a lot smoother up there. I would gladly trade some of those home runs for some RBIs that help the team win."

Ironically, San Francisco general manager Al Rosen was in attendance that night, but left after three of Williams' homers. When Rosen met with reporters the next day he said that one of the reasons the Giants had sent Williams to Triple-A was to build confidence, something a four-homer game certainly could do.

"Last night was exactly the kind of thing we wanted to have happen with Matt," Rosen said.

Williams doubted how much confidence any minor league game can give a player.

"I don't know if it gave me confidence because I hadn't made it yet in the big leagues," said Williams. "It was a good day and everything, but if I was to think about it then I guess I would have thought, 'Geez I wish I was doing this in the big leagues.'"

In 1997, Williams almost replicated the feat in Milwaukee against the Brewers when he homered three times on April 25 at County Stadium. He followed that up one night later with two home runs, the 20th time in big league history someone has hit five homers in a two-game span.

And even if Williams does manage to hit four home runs in a Major League game at some point in his career, he won't forget that night back in 1988.

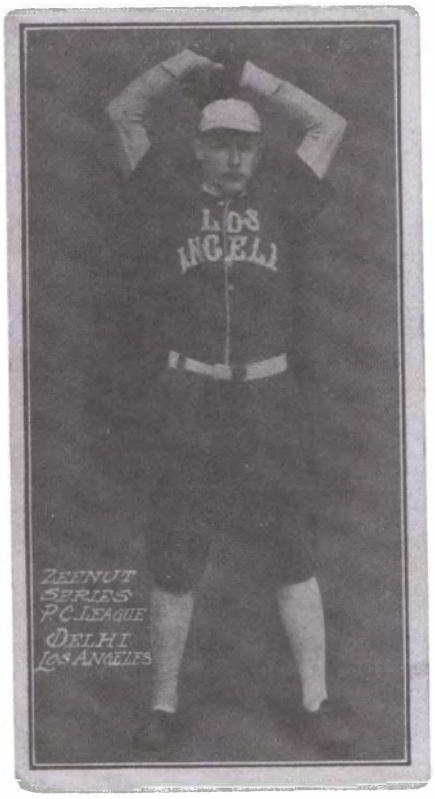
"It's not something you forget about," Williams said. "I'm sure I won't have any trouble remembering it."

Steve Gilbert is the editor of the Arizona Diamondbacks' website (www.azdiamondbacks.com). As a young sportswriter for the Mesa Tribune, *Gilbert witnessed Matt Williams' four-home run night.*

Flame Delhi: Arizona's First Big Leaguer

by Rodney Johnson

In the spring of 1912, Arizona was still growing up. After all, the former territory had only gained statehood in February and most of the country still thought of Arizona as the untamed Wild West. It's not surprising that on April 16th the first major league appearance by Flame Delhi, a rookie pitcher for the Chicago White Sox, went largely unnoticed. It probably wasn't even noted in any newspaper that Delhi was the first-born Arizonan to play big league baseball. Born in the mining town of Harqua Hala in 1892, Delhi had come up through the ranks of the Pacific Coast League and was getting his chance with the White Sox. The headlines of the Chicago newspapers on April 16th were dominated by the sinking of the Titanic which had gone down just a day earlier.



Flame Delhi's 1911 Pacific Coast League Baseball Card from the Zeenot Company

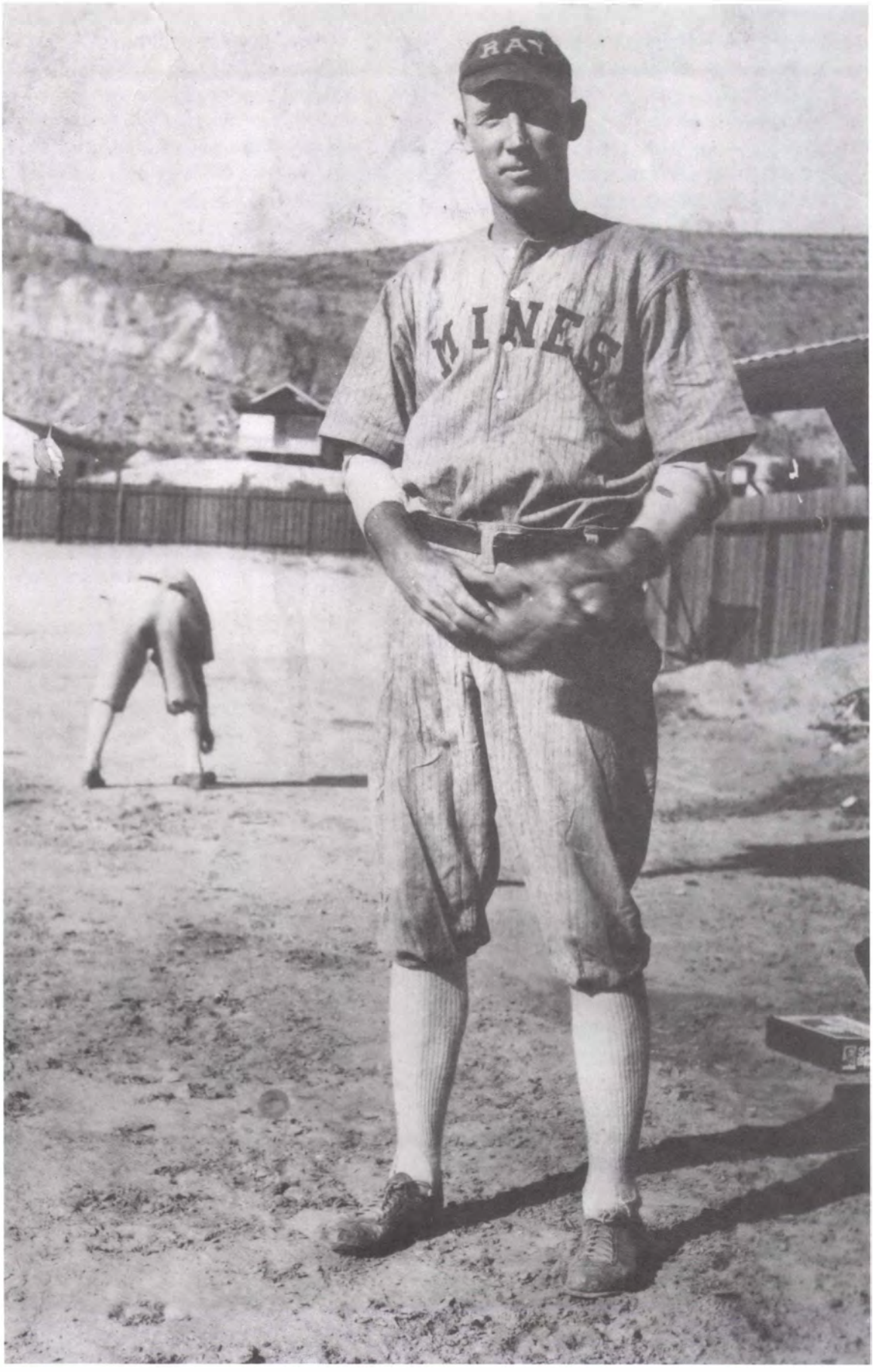
The next day, with the news of the Titanic disaster still dominating the headlines, the *Chicago American* reported on the Tigers-White Sox match-up by noting that the day was "too cold to play baseball" and the White Sox performed as if they knew it." About 3,000 fans braved the cold and the threat of rain to watch the Sox take on the Detroit Tigers who were without the services of the great Ty Cobb. The Georgia Peach was on a train headed back to Detroit. It seems that the room Cobb was assigned at the Chicago Beach Hotel was next to the Illinois Central Railroad tracks. When Cobb complained about the noise and was told that he couldn't be moved to another hotel, he became furious. He demanded that the whole team be moved and when his demand was declined, he refused to play and jumped a train home to Detroit. A young outfielder named Hank Perry replaced Cobb in the Detroit lineup that day.

Perry would be the first batter to face Delhi in the hurler's Major League debut. Lee William Delhi, nicknamed "Flame" because of his shock of red hair, came on to pitch in the top of the seventh inning with Chicago already trailing 4-0. Hank "Socks" Perry had himself just made his big league bow only six days earlier. His career, like Delhi's, would be brief. For Perry, 1912 would be his only big league season. It was a year that saw him play in only 13 games and this would be his greatest day in baseball as he went 2 for 6 against the Chisox. He ended the season with six hits in 36 at-bats, a .167 average.

So, as the seventh opened, it was two youngsters trying to make their mark. One in the lineup replacing the legendary Ty Cobb, the other thrown in to save the regular pitchers' arms on a blustery Chicago day. Flame showed the smoke that had gotten him to the big leagues when he struck out Perry. It would be the high point of his Major League career.

The next batter was future Hall-of-Famer Sam Crawford. "Wahoo" Sam slammed a shot back through the box past Delhi's ankles and into center field for a single. Del "Sheriff" Gainer, the Tiger first baseman, followed by grounding softly to shortstop Buck Weaver who made the play at first, sending Crawford to second—two outs. With Donie Bush at the plate, Crawford stole third, one of his 41 steals on the season. Bush then worked Delhi for a walk. It was one of the light-hitting shortstop's league leading 117 free passes that year. Bush, in spite of a lifetime average of only .250, led the American League in walks five times including four years in a row from 1909-12. At 5'6" and 140 pounds, the diminutive infielder used his size to his advantage.

Charlie O'Leary stepped to the plate with runners at the corners. O'Leary had been the Tigers' regular shortstop from 1904-07, but by 1912 he was playing second base and was in decline. He would play in only three games that season before being released. In the off-season O'Leary and former teammate Germany Schafer would work a vaudeville act together. On the first pitch to O'Leary, Bush took off for second. When catcher Bruno Block threw down, Crawford raced towards the plate. The relay home was late and both runners were safe having pulled off the double steal. Delhi then struck out O'Leary to end the inning.



Flame Delhi pitching for the semi-pro Ray Mines in 1917

In the bottom of the seventh inning, trailing 5-0, the Sox tried to rally as Callahan and Bodie singled. Mattie McIntyer then pinch hit for Chick Mattick. McIntyer lined a shot that was speared by O'Leary. He flipped the ball to Bush at second to double off Callahan and the relay to first was in time to catch Bodie off base—triple play! It was the second time in his career that Delhi's club had been victimized by a triple play. Flame was the pitcher of record for the Los Angeles Angels of the PCL on July 19, 1911, when teammate Roy Akin hit into an unassisted triple play. It was one of the strangest plays in baseball history as the fielder that turned the trick was the center fielder Walter Carlisle.

With the Detroit triple play in the books, any chance the Sox had for a comeback seemed to vanish. In the eighth inning it appeared the club had lost all of its spark. Flame was unable to get the bottom of the order out. Light-hitting catcher Oscar Strange led off with a single up the middle followed by a single by pitcher, Ed Willet, a .165 hitter on the year. It was his third hit of the game in a season in which he recorded only 19 hits. The leadoff hitter, Ossie Vitt, grounded to Weaver with Willett moving to second and Strange holding at third. Baldy Louden drew a walk to load the bases and bring up Perry. It looked like Delhi might escape the inning when Perry grounded back to the box and Flame threw home to force Stange for the second out, but big Sam Crawford grounded a shot past Weaver, scoring Willett and Louden. Perry tried for third but was thrown out by Callahan to end the inning.

After the White Sox failed to score in the eighth, Delhi returned to the mound for the ninth. Gainor reached on Weaver's error, Bush walked, O'Leary grounded out advancing the runners and Strange singled to center to drive in two runs. Willett and Vitt singled to load the bases and Louden singled past Delhi to score another run. Perry then hit back to Delhi who threw home for the force. Crawford mercifully flied to right to end the inning with three runs scoring. Of the nine outs Delhi recorded, four were accounted for by Perry who had struck out, grounded into two force plays, and been thrown out trying to go to third base.

When Flame left the mound he surely didn't realize that there wouldn't be another day. His career as a Major Leaguer was over. Delhi was pinch hit for to lead off the ninth and never again would appear in a big league game. The White Sox lost that day 10-1 but Arizona had seen their first native son play big league baseball.

Delhi had also left another legacy behind in Chicago. He was part of the composite that made up Jack Keefe, the bush league in Ring Lardner's "You Know Me Al" stories. In an interview with Ping Bodie that was published in 1940, Bodie talked about his role in Lardner's work: "Naw, I wasn't the Al in (sic) 'You Know Me Al' series that Ring Lardner wrote. I was the stoolie for Lardner. That character was a combination of Flame Delhi (he's president of Western Pipe and Steel now) and old Reb Russell. I roomed with both of them at different times and I'd tell Lardner what they said and he'd use it in those letters. That Lardner could write a bit, too."

Lee William Delhi
Born November 5, 1892
Harqua Hala, AZ

Died: May 9, 1966
San Rafael, CA

Delhi returned to the PCL with San Francisco but his arm was clearly shot. Although he had some success bouncing around the minors with Great Falls and Kansas City, his chance had passed him by. He did get a brief tryout with the Pirates and even roomed with the great Honus Wagner, but another big league appearance was not to be.

Finally in 1916, he returned to his roots in Arizona to play for a mining team in Ray. He played there for two seasons in exchange for the company giving him a education in engineering. He went on to become an executive in the shipbuilding industry, pioneering the use of underwater welding. At the height of the depression, he was earning $80,000 a year.

In retirement, Flame would tell baseball stories to his grandchildren while sipping on lemonade and gin. He died at Marin County Hospital on May 9, 1966, at the age of 75.

Rodney Johnson is the president of the Arizona Flame Delhi Chapter of SABR. He has written extensively about the history of Arizona baseball.

Greatest Arizona-Born Baseball Players

By Curt Blakeney

A couple of years ago, Harnett's Sports Arizona *magazine selected the 50 greatest Arizona athletes. One of the selection prerequisites was that the athlete must have been born and raised in Arizona.*

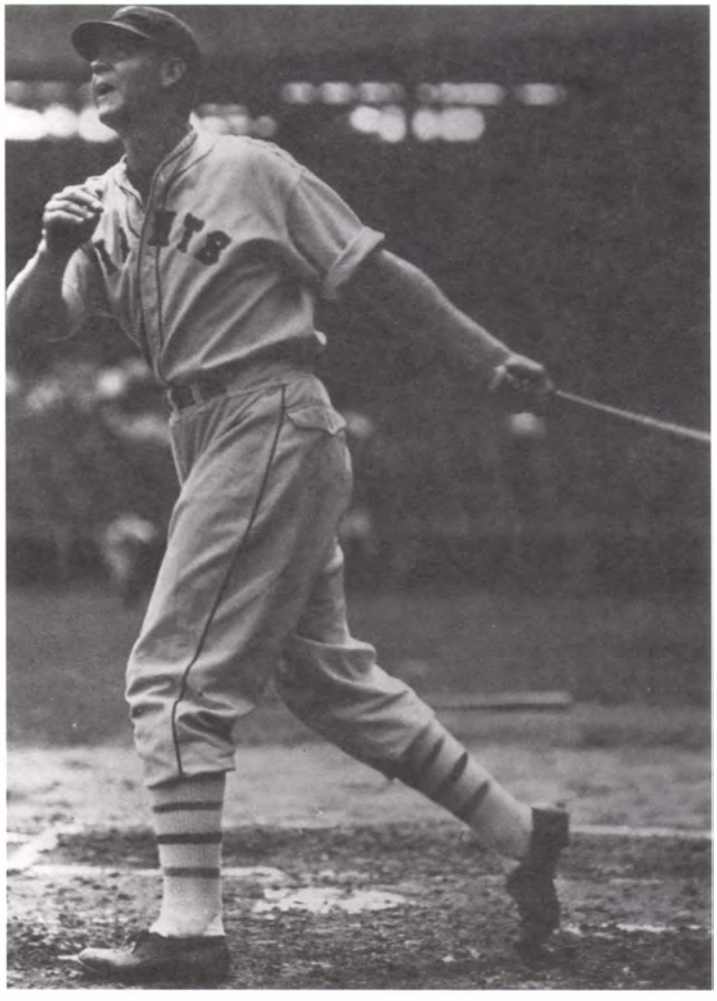
Arizona State University and NFL football star Curley Culp was named the greatest Arizona-born athlete, followed by Olympic gold medal-winning swimmer Charlie Hickcox. Among Arizona's top 50 athletes were ten present and former major leaguers. University of Arizona and New York Giants star Hank Leiber, ranked number eight on the Sports Arizona list, was rated the top Arizona-born baseball player. The following are Sport Arizona*'s biographies on the top Arizona-born athletes from the sport of baseball.*

Hank Leiber

It was the spring of 1932 and Hank Leiber was standing in the lobby of the plush Los Angeles Biltmore, anxiously awaiting his first encounter with the New York Giants John J. McGraw. Always in search of talent, McGraw had sent word years earlier to his former ace hurler, Art Nehf, who was living in Arizona, that he should keep an eye out for anyone that looked like a ballplayer. Nehf had been searching for quite some time to find a player who could compete at the major league level before he came across Leiber. And boy could Leiber play.

Born in Phoenix on January 17, 1911, Leiber was a big strapping fellow at 6-feet-1, 225 pounds. At Phoenix Union High, Leiber was the Arizona High School Baseball Player of the Year in 1928. He was also a star in football and an all-state center in basketball. In college, Leiber was a three-sport star at the University of Arizona, where he excelled in baseball, football and basketball. Famed Southern California Coach Howard Jones called Leiber "the greatest plunging back I ever saw." He was named All-Southwestern Conference as a fullback in 1930 and 1931. But as good as Leiber was at football, it was baseball where he would make his living.

Leiber broke into the big leagues with the Giants in 1933 as an outfielder. He played in 813 games with the Giants (1933-38, '42) and Chicago Cubs (1939-41) during a 10-year career that was cut short by two beanballs. Leiber was a three-time National League All-Star, who played in two World Series with the Giants, losing to the New York Yankees in 1936 and 1937. In 1935, Leiber had his best year, hitting .331 with 22 home runs, 110 runs scored and 107 runs batted in. With the Cubs in 1939, Leiber belted three home runs in one game and finished with 24, fourth best in the National League behind Johnny Mize, Mel Ott and Dolf Camilli. Known for his plate-crowding stance, Leiber suffered his first beaning in 1937 when he was hit during spring training by an 18-year-old rookie pitcher from Cleveland named Bob Feller. He missed most of that season but returned to hit .364 in the World Series. The second and more serious beaning took place in 1941 when he was hit in the head by the Giants' Cliff Melton. A year after the incident, he retired. Leiber finished his career with a lifetime .288 average and 101 home runs.



Hank Leiber
Photo courtesy of National Baseball Hall of Fame Library, Cooperstown, New York

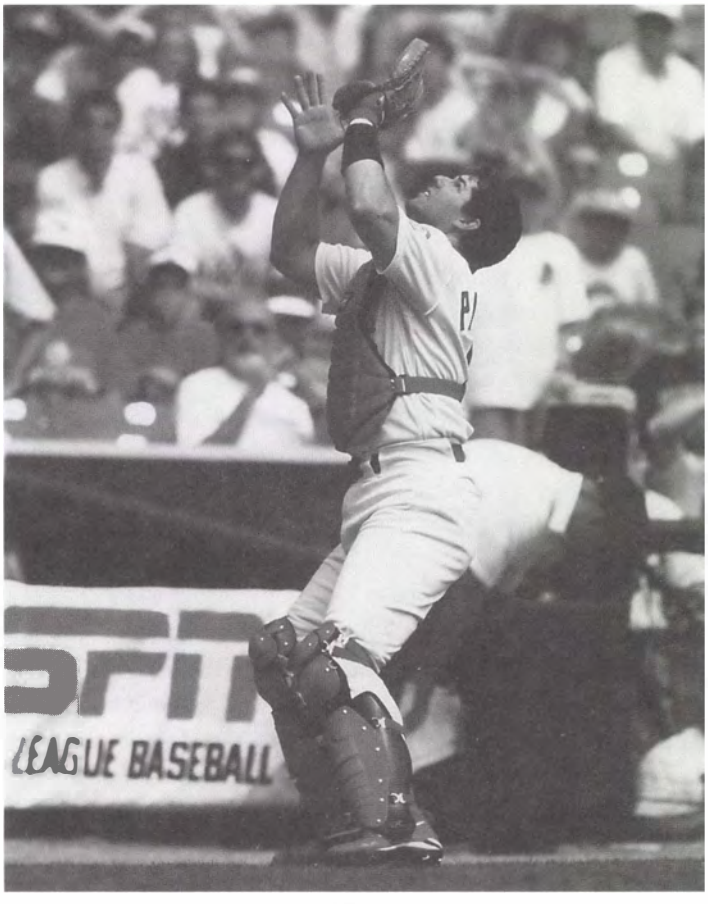
After leaving baseball, he returned to Tucson and became a successful real-estate developer. He passed away in November, 1993, at the age of 82.

John Denny

John Denny was 23 years old when he began his second season with the St. Louis Cardinals in 1976. He was coming off a solid rookie season, when he posted a 10-7 record, and was looking for an encore performance. He found it. By allowing just five earned runs in 47 innings during the final month of the season, Denny edged out Tom Seaver and Doug Rau for the National League ERA (earned run average) title. His 2.52 ERA tied him with Len Warnske (1932), Bill Doak (1914), and Jeff Tesreau (1912) as the youngest right-handed NL pitcher to win the title. Denny won 11 games that year and went on to post double figures in wins seven times during a 12-year career spent with St. Louis, Cleveland, Philadelphia, and Cincinnati. Denny's crowning accomplishment came in 1983 when he went 19-6 with a 2.37 ERA and overwhelmingly captured the National League Cy Young Award after garnering 20 of 24 first place votes. His .760 winning percentage was the second-highest in Phillies' history. Philadelphia reached the World Series that season and Denny was on the mound in Game One. He pitched the Phillies to a 1-0 advantage by limiting the Baltimore Orioles to one run over 7 2/3 innings of a 2-1 victory, though Baltimore went on to win the series in five games. Denny's 2.45 ERA in 1984 would have been good enough for a second ERA title, but he was 7.2 innings short of qualifying due to an elbow problem that forced him to miss 59 games. Denny finished his career with a 123-108 record. Born in Prescott on November 8, 1952, Denny lettered in baseball, football, basketball and track at Prescott High School. He holds the school record for strikeouts in a game (19) and was honorable mention all-state. In football, Denny was a punishing defensive back who earned second-team All-AAA Skyline Region Honors. Denny attended Yavapai Junior College and Southern Illinois University.

Billy Hatcher

The 1990 World Series was one to remember for Billy Hatcher. The Cincinnati Red became the first player in series history to hit safely in his first seven at-bats and finished with the .750 average (9-for-12) as the Reds swept the Oakland A's. His bat went straight to the Baseball Hall of Fame. Born in Williams on October 4, 1960, Hatcher attended Williams High School and was three times all-state in baseball, two times all-state in football and two times state track and field champion in four events. Hatcher finished his high school career with a .516 average, and was a junior college All-American at Yavapai College in Prescott. A career .268 hitter, Hatcher played 11 years in the major leagues with six teams.



Tom Pagnozzi
Photo Credit: Jim Herren Photography

He was hired as a minor-league instructor by the expansion Tampa Bay Devil Rays in December of 1995.

Tom Pagnozzi

A three-time Gold Glove winner, Tom Pagnozzi is considered one of the best defensive catchers in the major leagues. He spent his entire 11-year career with the St. Louis Cardinals and participated in a World Series and two League Championship Series. He was a National League All-Star in 1992. Born on July 29, 1962 in Tucson, Pagnozzi attended Rincon High School, where he received all-state honors in baseball. He also lettered in basketball. Pagnozzi started his college career at Central Arizona Junior College and broke school records for batting average, doubles, runs and hits. After transferring to Arkansas, Pagnozzi was named All-Southwest Conference in 1983, after leading the team in hitting (.362), runs batted in (50), and doubles (16). As a pro, Pagnozzi had his best season in 1996, when he batted .270 with 13 home runs, 55 RBI.

Alex Kellner

Alex Kellner grew up on a 25-acre ranch, just seven miles out of Tucson in the foothills of the Catalina Mountains. It was at the age of 4 that Kellner first began shagging flies

from his father, Johnny (who played in the Arizona Leagues during the 1920's). Born on August 16, 1924, Kellner was named after Hall of Fame pitcher Grover "Cleveland" Alexander. Kellner worked on his pitching control by constantly throwing tennis balls through a drainpipe on the ranch. The practice made Kellner one of the most dominating left-handed pitchers ever to be produced in Arizona. He attended Amphitheater High School, where he was named High School Baseball Player of the Year in 1938. In 1943, Kellner joined the Navy, where he was the water-tender aboard a destroyer in the Pacific. He broke into the major leagues with Connie Mack's Philadelphia Athletics squad late in 1948. In his 1949 rookie season, Kellner was one of the top hurlers in the league. He won 20 games and earned a spot on the American League All-Star Team. Kellner won 101 games and lost 112 during a 12-year career with Philadelphia, Kansas City, Cincinnati and St. Louis. He settled back in Tucson when his playing days were over and worked in construction. He passed away in May, 1996.

Gary Gentry

It was a 1971 article in *Sports Today* in which Gary Gentry, then a pitcher for the New York Mets, talked about his hatred of living in the Big Apple during the baseball season. The Phoenix native mentioned that he was more comfortable in Arizona where he loved to hop on his motorcycle and drive up the trails at Squaw Peak and Camelback mountains. Gentry enjoyed nothing more than riding those trails, gazing at the mountains and breathing the clean air.

Born on October 6, 1946, Gentry was a three-sport star at Camelback High School, where he was an all-scholastic in football, a guard on the basketball squad and a second baseman on the baseball team. At Phoenix College, Gentry was a two-time All-American and pitched the school to the National Junior College Championship. Then he enrolled at Arizona State and during his sophomore year compiled a 17-1 record, winning sixteen straight games at one point, and leading ASU to the 1967 NCAA title. Gentry's 229 strikeouts that season is a school record and his ERA of 1.14 ranks third best in the record books. He was All-American and named the College Player of the Year that season. He is in the ASU Sports Hall of Fame. As a pro, Gentry played seven years with the New York Mets and Atlanta Braves compiling a 46-49 career record. In the Mets miracle season of 1969, Gentry, then a rookie, won 13 games and lost 12. He won the third game of the World Series against Baltimore that year, allowing no runs in 6 2/3 innings.

Eddie Leon

Born in Tucson on August 11, 1946, Eddie Leon was an all-state baseball player his senior year at Tucson High. At the University of Arizona, the shortstop was a two-time All-American and three-time team MVP. In 1966, he set a school and national record with 75 runs batted in. In 1967, he led the Wildcats in hitting (.340) and finished his career second on the school's all-time list with 28 triples. The sure-handed infielder played for three teams in an eight- year major league career. He was a charter member of UA's Hall of Fame and is now involved with real estate development in Tucson.

Don Lee

One of the most dominant pitchers of his time, Don Lee holds several University of Arizona records, including most career wins (38), most complete games (36), and shutouts (8). Lee went 14-2 his junior year and 15-0, with a 1.14 earned run average, in his senior year, when he earned All-America honors. He is a member of the school's Hall of Fame. Born in Globe on February 26, 1934, Lee lettered in baseball, football, and basketball at North Phoenix High School and was a member of the 1949 state championship baseball team. He played for six teams in a nine-year major league career. Lee is retired and lives in Tucson.

Phil Ortega

Born of Yaqui Indian and Mexican descent on October 7, 1938 in Gilbert, Phil Ortega was one of the most dominating Arizona high school pitchers of all time. At Mesa High, Ortega compiled a 28-5 career record with 337 strikeouts and a 0.82 ERA as he led the school to two state championships. He was the first player named High School Baseball Player of the Year two consecutive seasons (1958 and 1959). Nicknamed the "Chief," he spent 10 years in the major leagues with three teams. He compiled double figures in victories three straight seasons from 1965 through 1967.

Lerrin LaGrow

A veteran of 10 major league seasons, Lerrin LaGrow was born in Phoenix on July 8, 1948. He attended Glendale High School and was all-state in baseball and all-conference in basketball. At Arizona State University, LaGrow was 19-1 over a two year period. He ranks third at ASU in all-time winning percentage (.950) and is a member of the school's Sports Hall of Fame. As a member of the Detroit Tigers' farm team, LaGrow was named Southern League Player of the Year in 1970. He had his best season in the majors when he went 7-3 with a 2.45 ERA and 25 saves in 1977 for the Chicago White Sox.

Curt Blakeney is the editor of Harnett's Sports Arizona *magazine. This article is reprinted courtesy of* Sport's Arizona.

Jim Palmer: The Pride of Scottsdale, Arizona

By Darren Urban

The highlight of Jim Palmer's high school baseball career was a game the star pitcher didn't start. It was a game he didn't win. But it was his last game in a Scottsdale High School uniform, before signing a contract soon after with the Baltimore Orioles and eventually becoming a Hall of Fame hurler.

The scene was this: as a prep senior in the spring of 1963, Palmer was the unquestioned superstar of the Scottsdale High Beavers. At the time, only four teams—the winners of the four high school divisions—qualified for the state tournament, meaning the Beavers needed just two victories to claim a state title. In the semifinals, Scottsdale was to play Phoenix Cortez High. Palmer, well rested, was primed to take the mound. In a season when Palmer posted a 6-1 record with 111 strikeouts and a 0.79 ERA in just 58 innings, a win was all but a lock.

For some reason, however, Scottsdale coach Boyd Hatch decided to start Tom Mooney. "I wanted to let Mooney go a few innings and save Jim for Saturday (and the championship)," Hatch told the *Scottsdale Progress* newspaper. "I only regret I didn't start him." Mooney gave up a run in the first inning and loaded the bases in the second before Palmer was brought in. It was too late, and Scottsdale lost, 3-1.

Incredibly, some at the time actually held it against Palmer, implying that the right-hander choked. But Palmer—who became one of the biggest clutch pitchers in the majors during his spectacular Orioles career—struck out 10 and gave up just one hit in the relief appearance against Cortez. Palmer was even nursing a sore arm at the time. Besides, that was only the finale of what was an amazing four years of high school athletics for Palmer.

He was a star in all three "major" sports: baseball, football and basketball. In basketball, he was a three-year starter at forward, an all-state performer, and was named the Beavers' offensive most valuable player his senior season when he averaged 21.9 points per game. He said years later in an interview one of his biggest regrets of signing a baseball contract out of high school was missing out on a chance to play college basketball. Palmer almost didn't play football, because no one wanted him risking his burgeoning baseball career. But Palmer and a couple friends helped hard-sell Palmer's mother into signing the permission slip to get on the football field. In two seasons, both on varsity, Palmer was a second-team receiver on the all-state team. He could have gone on to play football in college, as well. There was little question, however, baseball was it. Said Palmer to the *Progress* just before his final high school regular season game in 1963, "I want to be a major league baseball player." It was in his blood, after going at age 9 to a Cleveland Indians-New York Yankees game at Yankee Stadium just before his family moved to Arizona. The 1954 game, Palmer claimed later in a 1998 *Scottsdale Tribune* article, was his "best day ever." When Palmer got to Scottsdale, he found that Scottsdale Stadium was just about a mile away from his future high school, and he was able to watch the Boston Red Sox (who trained there at the time) and picture himself in future Cactus League games.

Then he beat one of Arizona's top high school senior pitchers when Palmer himself was a freshman and the scouts started to take notice. So did the local paper, which had already run a photo of Palmer as a little leaguer. As a sophomore, the *Progress* reported Palmer's first win of the 1961 season, after Palmer pitched the Beavers to an 8-2 victory over Phoenix Washington High. With two home runs early that season, his hitting prowess put Palmer on the list of "ones to watch for slugging." Already 6-foot-3 and 190 pounds, Palmer ended up hitting .333 as a sophomore, .482 as a junior and .304 as a senior. He clubbed five home runs his senior season, an impressive feat in the days of shorter seasons and wooden bats.

Palmer, soon after his high school days, hit it big. Just two years after he graduated from Scottsdale High, he was pitching for the Orioles. Four years after leaving his Beaver days behind, Palmer was pitching in the World Series. But even after his 268 major-league wins, he didn't forget his baseball roots. "What I remember most is ... I would come right out of basketball and the (state) tournament and into baseball, and you'd have the high skies, and the fly balls you could never quite see," Palmer said in a 1997 interview about playing baseball in Scottsdale.

What those who watched Palmer play baseball during those high school years, what they remember most was one of the best players—and perhaps the best athlete—the City of Scottsdale had ever produced. Even if he didn't start against Cortez his senior year.

Darren Urban is a sports writer for the Arizona Tribune Newspapers, serving suburban Phoenix. He has written extensively about Arizona high school sports.

Arizona-Born Players In The Majors

Name	Birthplace	Birthdate	Major League Teams (Years)
Beau Allred	Mesa	06-04-65	Cleveland (89-91)
George Arias	Tucson	03-12-72	California/San Diego (96-99)
Brian Banks	Mesa	09-28-70	Milwaukee (96-99)
Dave Baldwin	Tucson	03-30-38	Washington/Milwaukee/Chicago WS (66-70, 73)
Gil Blanco	Phoenix	12-15-45	New York Y/Kansas City (1965-66)
Marshall Boze	San Manuel	05-23-71	Milwaukee (96)
Keith Brown	Flagstaff	02-14-64	Cincinnati (88, 90-92)
Earl Collard	Williams	08-29-1898	Cleveland/Philadelphia (27-28, 30)
Mike Cosgrove	Phoenix	02-17-51	Houston (72-76)
Lynn Davenport	Tucson	06-27-00	Chicago WS (21-24)
Lee "Flame" Delhi	Harqua Hala	11-02-1890	Chicago WS (12)
John Denny	Prescott	11-08-52	St Louis/Cleveland/Philadelphia/Cincinnati (74-86)
Gary Gentry	Phoenix	10-06-46	New York Mets/Atlanta (69-75)
Dan Graham	Ray	07-19-54	Minnesota/Baltimore (79-81)
Ron Hassey	Tucson	02-27-53	Cleveland/Chicago C/New York Y/Chicago WS/ Oakland (78-90)
Billy Hatcher	Williams	10-04-60	Chicago C/Houston /Pittsburgh (84-89)
Solly Hemus	Phoenix	04-17-23	St Louis/Philadelphia (49-59)
Gil Heredia	Nogales	10-26-65	San Francisco/Montreal/Texas/Oakland (91-96, 98-99)
Rich Hinton	Tucson	05-22-47	Chicago WS/New York Y/Texas/Cincinnati (71-76)
Jack Howell	Tuscon	08-18-61	California/San Diego/Anaheim/Houston (85-91, 96-99)
Bobby Howry	Phoenix	08-04-73	Chicago WS (98-99)
Rex Hudler	Tempe	09-02-60	New York Y/Baltimore/Montreal/St Louis/California/Philadelphia (1984-98)
Jeff Huson	Scottsdale	08-15-64	Montreal/Texas/Baltimore/Seattle/Anaheim (88-99)
Adam Johnson	Hayden	03-01-17	Philadelphia (41)
Alex Kellner	Tucson	08-26-24	Philadelphia/Kansas City/Cincinnati/St Louis (48-59)
Wes Kellner	Tucson	04-26-29	Philadelphia (1952-53)
Lerrin LaGrow	Phoenix	07-08-48	Detroit/St Louis/Chicago WS/Los Angeles/Philadelphia (70, 72-80)
Don Lee	Globe	02-26-34	Detroit/Washington/Minnesota/Los Angeles A/Houston (57-66)
Hank Leiber	Phoenix	01-17-11	New York G/Chicago C (33-42)
Eddie Leon	Tucson	08-11-46	Cleveland/Chicago WS/New York Y (68-75)
Albie Lopez	Mesa	08-18-71	Cleveland/Tampa Bay (93-99)
Scott Lydy	Mesa	10-26-68	Oakland (93)
Clarence Maddern	Bisbee	09-26-21	Chicago C/Cleveland (46, 48-49, 51)
Alex Madrid	Springerville	04-18-63	Milwaukee/Philadelphia (87-89)
Kurt Miller	Tucson	08-24-72	Florida/Chicago C (94, 96-99)
Doug Mirabelli	Kingman	10-18-70	San Francisco (96-98)
Jim Moore	Prescott	12-14-03	Cleveland/Chicago WS (1928-32)
Ricky Nelson	Eloy	05-08-59	Seattle (83-86)
Don Nicholas	Phoenix	10-30-30	Chicago WS (52, 54)
Lou Novikoff	Glendale	10-12-15	Chicago C/Philadelphia (41-44, 46)
Jim Olander	Tucson	02-21-63	Milwaukee (91)
Tom Pagnozzi	Tucson	07-30-62	St Louis (87-98)
Steve Phoenix	Phoenix	01-31-68	Oakland (94-95)
Bob Porter	Yuma	07-22-59	Atlanta (81-82)
Phil Ortega	Gilbert	10-07-39	Los Angeles D/Washigton/California (60-69)
John Redmond	Florence	09-03-10	Washington (36)
Fred Rico	Jerome	07-04-44	Kansas City (69)
Anthony Sanders	Tucson	03-2/74	Toronto (99)
Jay Schlueter	Phoenix	07-31-49	Houston (71)
Dave Schmidt	Mesa	12-22-56	Boston (81)
Dave Stapleton	Miami	10-16-61	Milwaukee (87-88)
Max Venable	Phoenix	06-06-57	San Francisco/Montreal/Cincinnati/California (87, 89-91)
Ed Vosberg	Tucson	09-28-61	San Diego/San Francisco/Oakland/Texas/Florida (86, 90, 94-97, 99)
Vance Wilson	Mesa	03-17-73	New York M (99)
Alan Wirth	Mesa	12-08-56	Oakland (78-80)

Cactus League Time Line

By Mike Holden and Charlie Vascellaro

1999 marks the 53rd consecutive year of spring training in Arizona.

But one fact is often forgotten. When the Indians and Giants made the springtime trek west in 1947, they were not the first major league teams to train in the Grand Canyon State.

In 1929, the Detroit Tigers held spring training at Riverside Park in Phoenix. While Detroit played only two exhibition games in Phoenix against other major league teams, they have the distinction of being Arizona's first major league spring visitor.

The impact of the Cactus League on Arizona's rapid growth over the past half century is rarely mentioned. But one of the prime motives for spring training in the early years was to promote Arizona.

An Arizona Republic *editorial noted the day after the New York Giants left town in April 1947: "[M]ake no mistake about it, Phoenix has something, too, in the Giants' choice of this city. Where a favorite ball club takes its spring training is good enough recommendation for thousands of Americans with a yen for winter sun basking. Throughout the country this year, sports pages have carried datelines: 'Phoenix, Ariz.' and "Tucson, Ariz.' because the Giants and the Indians are here."*

Whether part of a grand plan or simply luck, both Arizona and the Cactus League have prospered over the last fifty years and, with rumors that the Dodgers are coming to Arizona, the future of AZ's spring circuit is very bright indeed.

Ernie Banks
Photo courtesy of National Baseball Hall of Fame Library, Cooperstown, New York

1947 Arizona spring training is born when Bill Veeck's Cleveland Indians and Horace Stoneham's New York Giants move to the Grand Canyon State. The Indians locate at Hi Corbett Field (then known as Randolph Field) in Tucson and the Giants play their home games at old Phoenix Muni Stadium, located at the corner of Central and Mohave in south Phoenix...Mel Ott, the Giants' player/manager, is the first Cactus League player to reach Cooperstown. Ott appears in several spring training games in '47 and then is inducted into the HOF in 1951.

March 8, 1947 In Arizona's first spring training contest between two Arizona-based teams, Cleveland ace Bob Lemon hurls three innings in a 3-1 win over the Giants in Tucson. A crowd of 4,934 witnesses the contest.

1948 First baseman Larry Doby, the first African-American to play in the American League, trains in Tucson with the Indians this spring.

1949 The Cleveland Indians, winners of the '48 World Series, get a warm welcome in the Old Pueblo as the first defending World Champions to train in Arizona. Only seven times over the past 52 years have teams that trained in Arizona won the World Series: Cleveland (1948), New York Yankees (1951), New York Giants (1954), and Oakland Athletics (1972-74 and 1989).

Larry Doby
Photo courtesy of National Baseball Hall of Fame Library, Cooperstown, New York

1951 The New York Giants and New York Yankees swap spring sites in 1951 with the Giants heading to St. Petersburg and the defending World Champions coming to Phoenix. Nineteen-year-old Mickey Mantle attends his first big league spring camp and is almost immediately labeled by New York writers as the "new phenomenon."

1952 The Chicago Cubs become the third team to make Arizona their springtime home, relocating from Catalina Island to Rendezvous Park in Mesa. Hall of Famer Ernie Banks joins the Cubs the following year and becomes a Cactus League fixture for the next 19 springs.

1954 In their first year of existence, the Baltimore Orioles (formerly the St. Louis Browns) train in Yuma but the stay is a short one; the club moves to Daytona, Florida in 1955…In October, the Giants and Indians square off in the first all-Cactus League World Series.

1956 The Orioles are back, this time taking roost at the new Scottsdale Stadium.

1959 Baltimore returns to Florida and is replaced in Scottsdale by the Boston Red Sox.

1960 Arizona fans get to see Red Sox great Ted Williams in his final spring.

1961 The following year, rookie Carl Yastrzemski takes over in left field for Boston.

1961 The expansion Los Angeles Angels set up their spring operations in Palm Springs, becoming the Cactus League's fifth team.

1962 Expansion continues to have a positive effect on the Cactus League. The league grows to six teams with the addition of the Houston Colt .45s. Houston moves into Geronimo Park in Apache Junction but the club's stay lasts only two springs.

March 8, 1964 The San Francisco Giants defeat the Cleveland Indians, 6-2, in the first game at the new Phoenix Municipal Stadium. The park, built at a cost of $891,380, gets rave reviews. Giants owner Horace Stoneham describes the park as "a pip of a place to play ball." Willie McCovey, who trained in Arizona every spring for his entire 22-year-career, gets the first hit at the "Muni."

1965 The Cubs play their final season at Mesa's Rendezvous Park and head back to California while the Red Sox leave Scottsdale after seven years for Florida.

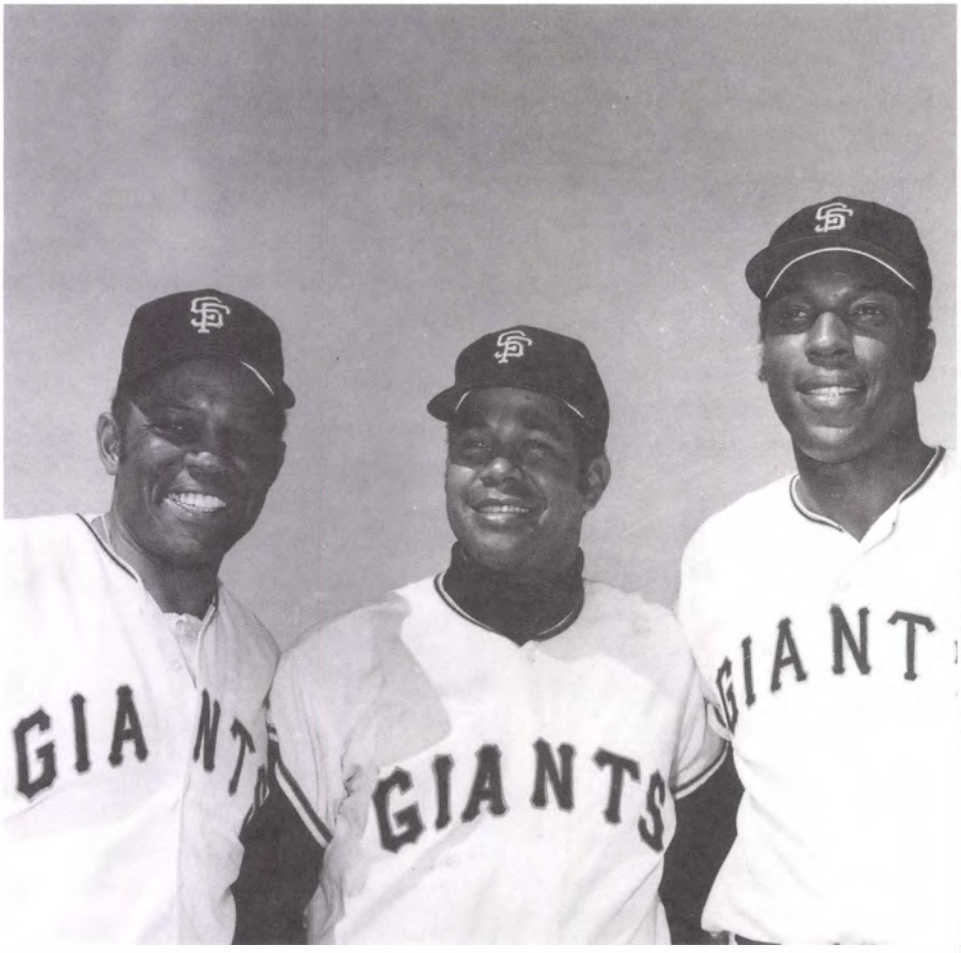
1966 Arizona spring training reaches a low point with only the two original teams—the Indians and the Giants—remaining in Arizona.

1967 After one spring in Long Beach, the Cubs relocate to Scottsdale Stadium, where they will remain until moving to Mesa's HoHoKam Park in 1979.

1969 Three new teams. The Seattle Pilots move into newly-constructed Tempe Diablo Stadium; the San Diego Padres set up spring operations in Yuma; and Charlie Finley's Oakland Athletics, recently transplanted from Kansas City, pick Mesa's Rendezvous Park as their new spring home.

1970 In one of the Cactus League's strangest sagas, Tempe's team comes to town as the Seattle Pilots and leaves as the Milwaukee Brewers. After the Pilots declare bankruptcy (the American League advanced $650,000 to help defray spring training costs), Milwaukee car dealer Bud Selig successfully

Hank Aaron working out with the Brewers in Sun City in 1975.
Photo Credit: UPI/Bettman



Willie Mays, Juan Marichal, and Willie McCovey in 1970
Photo courtesy of National Baseball Hall of Fame Library, Cooperstown, New York

offers $10.8 million for the Pilots just one week before opening day…SF Giants Willie Mays, Juan Marichal and Willie McCovey became the first three teammates to earn $100,000 each in a single season.

1973 The Milwaukee Brewers move to Del Webb's retirement community Sun City.

1976 Labor strife impacts spring training for the first time. A lockout by the owners keeps training camps closed until March 19 before Commissioner Bowie Kuhn intervenes. About half of the Cactus League games are cancelled as a result of the lockout … All-time home run king Hank Aaron spends his final spring with the Brewers in Sun City.

1977 Tempe finds another tenant from Seattle for Diablo Stadium, the expansion Mariners. In the inaugural game at Mesa's Hohokam Park, the Seattle Mariners pound the Oakland A's, 16-7.

1979 The Cubs return to Mesa after a 14-year absence and Oakland switches spots by moving to Scottsdale.

1980 Ongoing labor wars between the players and the owners disrupt the Cactus League again. With negotiations at a standstill, the Players Association votes to cancel the last week of exhibition games and 20 games are wiped out.

1984 Ending a 38-year relationship with the City of Phoenix, the San Francisco Giants move to Scottsdale and the Oakland A's relocate to Phoenix Muni.

March 7, 1986 Compadre Stadium debuts in Chandler. A crowd of 6,075 watch the Chicago Cubs defeat the Milwaukee Brewers, 7-4, with Cubs minor leaguer Tony Woods connecting

The Milwaukee Brewers played in Sun City from 1973 to 1985. That retirement community's ballpark was equipped with "golf cart" seating.

Cub outfielder Harv Gentry is receiving a claim to an Arizona gold mine at Mesa's Rendezvous Park as part of the welcome festivities during the Cubs' first Cactus League season in 1952.

Photo courtesy of *The Sporting News* Library and Archive

for the first home run at Compadre, a two-run shot in the eighth inning off Brewers reliever Ray Searage.

1988 On March 26, 9,812 fans pack Compadre Stadium to watch the Cubs and Brewers, the largest crowd in Cactus League history as of that date.

1989 For only the second time in over 40 years, two Cactus League teams met in the World Series. In the earthquake-interrupted Series, the Oakland Athletics sweep the San Francisco Giants, four games to none... Ken Griffey, Jr., who at the age of 19 was invited to spring training as a non-roster player, goes on a tear (.356, 2 HRs, 21 RBIs in 26 games) and earns the starting centerfield spot in the Mariners' opening day lineup.

1990 The start of the Cactus League season is delayed until March 26 due to a 32-day lockout by the owners. Over 60 games are cancelled.

1992 After 46 years, the Cleveland Indians announce they are moving from Tucson to Florida.

1993 The expansion Colorado Rockies replace the Indians at Hi Corbett Field in Tucson and the Angels leave Palm Springs for Tempe.

1994 Peoria hits a Cactus League "double play" with the Mariners' and Padres' move into the new $32 million Peoria Sports Complex.

1995 A spring not to remember. The strike that caused cancellation of the '94 World Series continues and the owners open camp with "replacement players." The owners threaten to start the season without the striking players but the labor dispute ends on the eve of opening day when a federal judge issues a preliminary injunction against the owners. A truncated spring training opens on April 2 and teams play only about a ten-game schedule in Arizona.

March 30, 1996 HoHoKam Park's 20-year run ends with a dramatic flourish when Ozzie Timmons blasts a solo homer in the tenth inning to propel the Cubs to a 5-4 win over the Brewers in ten innings. A total of 1,692,067 fans attended Cactus League games at HoHoKam Park, an average of 5,937 spectators per game.

1997 The Cactus League's largest crowd ever—12,833—sees the Cubs battle the Rockies on March 28... The final game is played at Compadre Stadium on March 24.

1998 The Arizona D-Backs take the field for the first time on February 27 and defeat the White Sox, 6-5...Two new stadiums debut—the Milwaukee Brewers' new home becomes Maryvale Baseball Park, a $23 million complex in west Phoenix; and the $37 million Tucson Electric Park, is home to the Arizona D-Backs and the Cactus League's newest entrant, the Chicago White Sox.

1999 The Cactus League draws 981,500 fans, a new record for games in Arizona.

Cactus League Time Line

Integration and the Early Years of Arizona Spring Training

by Jeb Stuart Rosebrook, M.A., Ph.D./abd

In the history of professional baseball in Arizona, 1947 would be a year that would change the pre-season baseball landscape forever. While it would be a year before spring training in the Grand Canyon state would be integrated, over the winter of 1946-47 the twenty-seven year old, maverick-owner of the Cleveland Indians, Bill Veeck, lobbied his friend Horace Stoneham, Jr., owner of the New York Giants, to move their spring training operations from Florida to Tucson and Phoenix respectively. Arizona offered both owners a fresh marketplace, with little competition, and lots of distance distance from the Jim Crow conditions of Florida and the South.

Larry Doby shagging fly balls at spring training, late 1940s.

Courtesy of National Baseball Hall of Fame Library
Cooperstown, N.Y.

Both were familiar with Arizona, Veeck having lived in Tucson and Stoneham, Jr. in the Phoenix area. Plus the Giants and Indians were guaranteed good competition because the Cubs and White Sox, as well as the Pacific Coast League teams, trained in California. More importantly, the West Coast offered Pacific Coast League baseball fans who eagerly attended the games thereby providing good gate receipts for the ball clubs.

Veeck's decision to move the Indians to Arizona mirrored the Brooklyn Dodgers' move to Havana, which Veeck saw as providing the Dodgers with a spring training home less hostile to integration. The racial problems of Florida in the late 1940s disturbed Veeck and he knew if he was going to integrate his team, those conditions would disrupt his team's training program. Although neither Stoneham nor Veeck brought any African-American players to Arizona with their teams in 1947, Veeck had already promised himself he would integrate his team that season.

Additionally, when the Indians returned to Cleveland for the regular season of 1947, Veeck's management team planned for future springs in Arizona and secured the Tucson Cowboys as the American League team's C-Class farm club. Stoneham, not as progressive as Veeck, would not integrate his team until he let Leo Durocher re-shape the Giants in 1949, the year the fiery manager brought Monte Irvin and Hank Thompson up to the big league club from the triple-A Jersey Giants in mid-season.

The early months of 1947 gave fans a chance to see the first spring training season in Arizona since the Tigers warmed up in Phoenix in 1929. With the Giants and Indians out West for the entire spring, major league followers were also treated to an increase in exhibition games against the Chicago Cubs and Chicago White Sox. As before the war, the major league teams, after completing their March training in California, would stop at Arizona communities along their rail route back East.

One of the top players to appear in spring training in 1947 was fastballer, Bob Feller, who "looked forward to training among the cowboys and the cactus." Other well known stars on the Cleveland roster who drew fans to the Arizona and California parks that spring were future Hall of Famers Lou Boudreau and Bob Lemon. The Giants kept fans excited with Johnny Mize, player-manager Mel Ott, and Ernie Lombardi, all Hall of Famer's today. The New Yorkers also had a phenom named Clint Hartung, who would never live up to his rookie expectations.

The Chicago White Sox and Chicago Cubs also played exhibitions in Arizona that spring, with other Hall of Famers such as Chisox` Luke Appling, Bill Dickey, and future Yankee great, Eddie Lopat. The Cubs, just two years from their last pennant in 1945, quickly descended to the second division after the league's other teams returned to their pre-war rosters and did not have a star on their team that would ever qualify for the Hall of Fame. While the Cubs would produce some

well-known players in the coming decades, including Hall-of-Fame great Ernie Banks, the loyal fans of the north side Chicago team could not know in 1947 that their team, which had appeared in ten World Series in the first five decades of the century, would spend most of the next fifty years mired in mediocrity.

In the spring of 1948, the majors returned to their spring training facilities in the West, South, and the Caribbean. The Dodgers continued to lead the way in developing African-American players for the big leagues, with Roy Campanella and Don Newcombe joining Jackie Robinson. The Brooklyn team, trained in Ciudad Trujillo, Dominican Republic, to escape the harsh racism of Florida. Bill Veeck, who would sign legendary Negro league pitcher Satchel Paige to the Cleveland Indians in July 1948, returned his squad to Tucson for a competitive spring against his friend Horace Stoneham's Giants in Phoenix, as well as the Chicago Cubs in Los Angeles, the Chicago White Sox in Pasadena, the Pittsburgh Pirates in Hollywood, and the St. Louis Browns in San Bernardino. With six teams on the West Coast, the American and National League squads provided the needed competition to prepare for the season, a requirement owners would seek to maintain as long they chose to train in the Far West away from the majority of the teams in Florida.

Ernie Banks signing autographs at Mesa's Rendezvous Park.

In Arizona, Veeck did not find a completely hospitable climate for his integrated team; Larry Doby would not be allowed to stay at the Santa Rita Hotel with his teammates in 1948, a victim of Arizona's own version of Jim Crow. Veeck promised it was going to be the only year Doby and the other African-American players were barred from staying with at the team's hotel while the Indians trained in Arizona. Unfortunately, Veeck's promise went unheeded, and Doby and his expanding family, as well as all other African-American players, spent every spring separated from their teammates, segregated to homes of African-American Tucsonans. Despite these prejudicial conditions, Doby strived to break down the barriers facing African-Americans in organized baseball.

The Indians remained the only integrated team among the teams training in the West until Durocher brought Monte Irvin and Hank Thomspon back with the Giants to Phoenix in 1950. That spring, the Pacific Coast League integrated when catcher John Ritchey became the first African-American in the stellar West Coast loop. The Indians, with its progressive owner, won the pennant in a tie-breaker against the Boston Red Sox and then defeated the National League Boston Braves in the World Series. In the first two years of integration, the Dodgers, with Jackie Robinson, and the Indians with Larry Doby and Satchel Paige, had won their respective leagues and played in the Fall Classic. Doby, always second to Robinson, was first, with Paige, to claim the title as the first African-American champions of Major League baseball. Doby returned to Paterson, New Jersey, with 10,000 fans waiting to give him a hero's homecoming.

The Giants trained at Old Municipal Stadium in Phoenix until 1964.

Courtesy of History and Archives Division, Arizona Department of Library, Archives and Public Records (96-4421P)

Mickey's Arizona Spring

By Mike Holden

1951 is remembered as the one and only year that the New York Yankees trained in Arizona. When the Yankees ventured west, the Cactus League was in its infancy. Only two teams were training in the Grand Canyon State—the Cleveland Indians and New York Giants had both moved to Arizona in 1947. The Yankees spent the spring of 1951 in Phoenix under a one-time only swap with the Giants, who took over the Yankees' St. Petersburg site in Florida. Del Webb, the Yankees co-owner and a Phoenix resident, had brokered the switch with Giants owner Horace Stoneham, because Webb reportedly wanted to show off the Bronx Bombers to his friends in Arizona.

The 1951 Yankees were a formidable club. The two-time defending world champions had swept the Philadelphia Phillies in the 1950 World Series. Manager Casey Stengel's lineup included future Hall of Famers Joe DiMaggio, Yogi Berra and Phil Rizzuto. Although no one knew it at the time, Arizona fans watched the New Yorkers prepare for their third of five straight World Series victories.

Two developments in the spring of 1951 made the Yankees' lone visit to the Grand Canyon State even more memorable. First, Mickey Mantle, then a 19-year-old youngster with only one full season of pro experience, emerged on the baseball scene as the most "precocious juvenile player seen in a major camp since Mel Ott, at 16, came up to the Giants." Second, the Yankee Clipper Joe DiMaggio announced shortly after arriving in Phoenix that "this is very likely my last year."

Between the close of the 1950 season and the start of training camp the following spring, Mantle received more publicity than any other Yankee rookie. The switch-hitting Mantle had put up impressive offensive numbers in his first two years of professional baseball. After graduating from high school in 1949, he played 89 games at shortstop with Independence in the Class-D Kansas-Oklahoma-Missouri League and finished third in the batting race with a .313 mark. In 1950, his first full pro season, Mantle again played shortstop, this time for Class-C Joplin in the Western Association and batted a league-leading .383 with 26 home runs and 136 RBIs.

Mantle was the talk of the hot stove league. On January 31, 1951, *The Sporting News* included a feature on Mantle entitled "Yanks to Take Early Look at Mantle, Rated Top Prospect in Minors at 19". The article stated that "some big time scouts" have dubbed Mantle "as the No. 1 minor league prospect in the nation." Tom Greenwade, the Yankees scout who signed Mantle, said in the same article, "Mick is the kind of player you dream about finding. You just hope you can run across one kid like him in a lifetime." The article closed with more Mickey-hype: "What more could a scout ask than a player just turned 19, as fast as a rabbit, with a rifle arm, tremendous power, proved under fire, with one third-place finish and one batting title in two years . . . . Like a find of uranium in your back yard."

Despite such lavish praise, no one expected Mantle to jump from Class-C to the defending champions when the Yankees came to Phoenix in 1951.

Before the start of major league spring training, Mantle was invited to attend a two-week instructional school for 28 of the organization's top prospects. The "instructual school," as Stengel called it, was a recent Yankee innovation where the young players received intensive instruction from Stengel, his coaches and several other instructors, including recently retired Yankee outfielder Tommy Henrich.

Mantle was scheduled to report on February 15 but he failed to show up. Yankee coach John Nuen telegraphed Mantle in Commerce, Oklahoma on February 17 asking why he was not in Phoenix. Mantle responded that he had not received his travel allowance. "Action was prompt after that," one New York paper reported, "and Mantle was on a plane to Phoenix the next day."

Spring training in 1951 was not Mantle's first visit to Phoenix. The Yankees had invited Mantle to another instructional school in February 1950 but the Phoenix camp was cancelled after only a few days when Commissioner Happy Chandler decided that the Yankees were violating the then March 1 official reporting date for training. Despite its short duration, Yankees general manager George Weiss called the first coaching school "an unqualified success." One reason was that the Yankees had a chance to observe the 18-year-old Mantle, who made a big impression on the team's brain trust. *The Sporting News* reported: "Mantle showed the Yankee officials enough to make them realize that here was a lad who was going to have his name written in many major league box scores."

Yankees officials had debated about Mantle's position for

Mantle's switch-hitting drew a lot of attention during his spring in Arizona. These photos appeared in The Sporting News *on April 4, 1951 with the caption: "Hits 'Em Righthanded or Lefthanded; Mantle . . . Hopes His Hitting May Force Yankees to Carry Him to The Stadium."*

Courtesy of The Sporting News Library and Archive, St. Louis, Missouri.

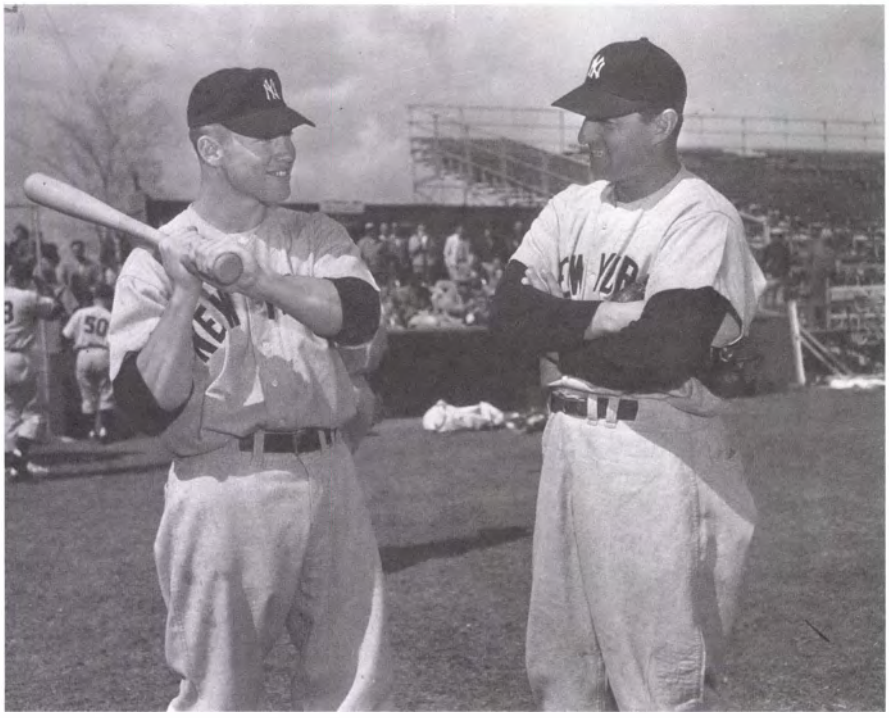
the upcoming 1951 campaign during the off-season. Mantle had struggled defensively at shortstop with over 100 errors in the 184 minor league games he had played in his first two seasons. General Manager Weiss said, "Some of our men say he should remain at short, some say he should be converted into an outfielder."

Upon Mantle's arrival in Phoenix on February 19, 1951, Stengel ended the debate by moving him from shortstop to the outfield. Stengel explained the decision: "To make a first-class shortstop out of Mantle would require a couple of years, anyway, but to convert the young man into an outfielder—well that should not take too long."

Stengel assigned Henrich to act as Mantle's personal tutor. After only a couple of weeks of instruction, Henrich gave his student high marks. "I'll tell you one thing," he said, "the kid can catch the ball. He seems to have natural instincts of an outfielder. He can use his great speed there to more advantage than in the infield." Henrich continued: "[H]e has the willingness to learn and work at the new job. I've been driving the hell out of him and he's never complained once. At the end he's always asking for more."

Mantle was also enthusiastic over the switch from shortstop to outfield. "I don't know why I've been wasting my time in the infield," he said. "This fly-catching is right down my alley. It gives me a chance to use my speed. Of course, I've still got a bit to learn. Those long drives over your head are a lot harder to judge than the simple pops that a shortstop gets to handle. But that Henrich is a great teacher and I know I'll learn the little tricks before too long...."

Mantle and five other "school kids" were invited to stay in the major league camp when Stengel's instructual school ended on February 28. Stengel wanted to take a better look at



Mickey Mantle and his defensive tutor Tommy Henrich in Phoenix, 1951.
Courtesy of The Sporting News Library and Archive, St. Louis, Missouri

the "Jewel from Mine Country" (a nickname coined by the media in 1951 that did not stick).

With the Mantle story only beginning to unfold, DiMaggio made his stunning announcement on March 3: "This might be my last year. I would like to have a good year and then hang them up." The news, which apparently flabbergasted Yankee management, increased the focus on Mantle, who the media quickly labeled as DiMaggio's likely replacement in center field. "As the peerless DiMaggio prepares to bow out," the *New York Post* observed, "perhaps his successor is at hand. It would be typical Yankee fortune."

But before this prophecy could become a reality, Mantle needed to prove his worth. Mickey got off to a flying start. In the first intrasquad game on March 6, he connected for a triple and a home run off rookie pitcher Wally Hood. In the first regular exhibition game of the spring against the Cleveland Indians in Tucson on March 10, Mickey was in the starting lineup—in centerfield and batting third. He again was impressive with three hits in his first three at bats. Two were singles off future Hall of Fame pitcher Early Wynn and the other was a ground-rule double into the roped off crowd in left field.

On March 12 in the Yankees' Phoenix debut before an overflow crowd of 7,398 at old Municipal Stadium, Mantle started in centerfield but went hitless in one at bat. In the fourth inning, he showed his inexperience in the outfield when he lost Indian shortstop Ray Boone's long fly in the sun and was struck on the forehead by the ball as he sought to get out of the way. Mantle's sunglasses were broken and he left the game unhurt except for a "small egg" on his forehead.

Mickey, back in the starting lineup the following day, demonstrated his speed in the Yankees' 10—8 ten inning road victory over the Indians. He got three infield "leg" hits in five official trips and the *New York Herald Tribune* reported "in every case it was his ability to get down to first base ahead of the throw."

Although the Yankees had a 34-game schedule that spring, only ten games were actually played in Arizona. After four games against the Indians in Phoenix and Tucson, the Yankees embarked on a 12-game trip through California with most of the contests against Pacific Coast League opponents.

Mantle continued to pummel enemy hurlers during the West Coast trip. He hit his first home run as a Yankee at Wrigley Field in Los Angeles—a 430-foot shot to deep center field. The homer was described "as one of the longest homers yet achieved in that park" and according to *The Sporting News*, "the ball traveled so fast that neither Center Fielder Bob Talbot nor the men in the press box ever saw it." A couple of days later, Mickey belted his second roundtripper—another line drive shot—in an 11-0 victory over Joe Gordon's Sacramento club. During the California swing, Mickey connected for five homers in 12 games and media attention continued to mount.

Stengel complained in San Francisco that "you writers have blowed up the kid so much that I gotta take him to New York with me." But Mantle's play on the field rather than media pressure would ultimately be the deciding factor.

The Bronx Bombers returned to Phoenix on March 27 for six games at Municipal Stadium. The Yanks left the Valley of the Sun on April 2 for exhibition games in Texas and Kansas City before returning to New York.

It did not take long to figure out that Mantle was something special. Early in spring training, the New York writers labeled Mantle as "the new phenomenon" in the Yankees camp. *The New York Times* called Mantle "one of those 'finds' that comes along once in a generation."

Stengel consistently praised Mantle in the press throughout spring training. On March 4, the Yankees skipper told the *New York Post* that Mantle is a natural hitter. "Most switch hitters are born of weakness," Stengel said. "They can't hit the opposite type of pitching, but this isn't the case with Mantle."

In mid-March, Stengel declared, "The kid can run and throw with any outfielder in the game right now. I think he

might become the best switch hitter since Frankie Frisch. Tommy Henrich is working on his fielding and the improvement is already remarkable. . . . My how that boy can run. He goes from first to third looking back at you, and the umpires always call him safe. That's important. He's the future, that boy. He's the future."

Mantle also impressed his Yankee teammates. DiMaggio declared in early April 1951 that "Mickey Mantle is the greatest prospect I can remember. Maybe he has to learn something about catching a fly ball, but that's all. He can do everything else." DiMaggio also expressed no resentment over the attention Mantle received during spring training. "If he's good enough to take my job," Joe added, "I can always move to right or left."

Stengel and the Yankees wrestled throughout the spring with the decision whether to promote Mantle to the majors. In discussing the Mantle situation, writer Dan Daniel said in *The Sporting News* that "to leap from Class C into ranks of the Yankees would be a feat without precedent on the club in the past 30 years." But as early as March 5, one newspaper reported that Stengel had declared Mantle "has a good chance of making the big club." By March 18, however, Stengel seemed to have changed his mind: "I'm going to send him out. I can't keep a boy like that sitting on the bench. I'd rather have him play every day and learning to catch flyballs in the sunlight. He's never played before except under the lights. But I'll have him where I can get hold of him in a hurry any time during the season." The Yankees skipper realized that a four-classification jump was a big risk but he said in early April, "If he has what it takes I'll take the gamble."

As the Yankees prepared to depart Phoenix on April 2, *New York Times* writer James P. Dawson summed up Mantle's spring training performance: "[T]he name that stood out when the Yanks started training here more than a month ago stands out even more as the champions prepare to break camp for the homeward trip to what the camp hopes will be the third straight pennant for Manager Casey Stengel. The name is Mickey Mantle. It is worn by a husky, 19-year-old...and unless all signs fail, this name eventually will go right down through the annals of baseball like some of the other greats."

Mickey's first big league spring was not trouble-free. The Korean war was ongoing in 1951 and the military draft was in effect. The Yankees' roster had already been depleted with Whitey Ford, Billy Martin, Dave Madison and Artie Schult in the service. Mickey was classified as 4-F—unsuitable for military service—because of acute osteomyelitis in his left ankle. He had suffered an injury during a high-school football game and an infected hematoma led to osteomyelitis. The condition was acute enough to cause changes to the bone structure in the vicinity of his ankle. However, apparently because of public pressure, Mantle was summoned by his Miami, Oklahoma draft board to report for a reexamination late in spring training. With considerable media attention, the doctors reviewed Mantle's case and came to the same conclusion—he was still unsuitable for military service. After the reexamination on April 11, Mickey flew to New York to join the Yankees for their final spring training contests against the Brooklyn Dodgers.

Mickey had an exceptional spring in 1951. He batted .402 and led the club with nine home runs and 31 RBIs. In the nine spring games Mantle played in Phoenix and Tucson, he hit a remarkable .469 (15-for-32) with three doubles, six RBIs and nine runs scored. Interestingly, none of Mantle's nine spring roundtrippers was launched in Arizona.

Mantle later recalled in his autobiography, *Whitey and Mickey*, that the Yankees' one-time spring switch to Arizona may have hastened his rise to the majors. "If we had been in St. Petersburg, I wouldn't have hit all of those home runs like I was hitting in Phoenix. I must have hit about fifteen home runs [actually nine], but the ball carries a lot better there because the air is dry and light, and you can seen the ball good because the air is so clear. They just carry better there, and I don't think I would have caught the press's attention—or Casey's—in St. Pete's like I did in Phoenix."

Mantle made the Yankees' roster in 1951 at age 19 and was the starting right fielder in the team's season opener against the Boston Red Sox in Yankee Stadium. In less than two years, he had jumped from a high school team into the ranks of the defending world champions. When *The Sporting News* interviewed Mantle in the clubhouse before the opening game, he expressed disbelief about his meteoric rise to the majors: "I somehow get the feeling that I hadn't ought to be here. That maybe it's a mistake, after all, and I am supposed to be in Kansas City. Now . . . please do not misunderstand this statement, I do not lack confidence. If I did I would not be sitting here . . . a Yankee. It is just that I am awed by the history of the New York club and by my company."

Almost fifty years have passed since the Bronx Bombers trained in the Grand Canyon State but that visit remains as one of the most memorable chapters in Arizona baseball history. One reason is that Mickey Mantle made the most of his only Arizona spring.

Mike Holden is a Phoenix lawyer and publisher of Baseball AZ, *a monthly newsletter focusing on baseball in Arizona.*

Cactus League Wins Fight For Survival

By Tom Girard

"The future of Cactus League Baseball is now in question. While the league has provided considerable enjoyment for thousands of baseball fans and has generated millions of dollars for local economies, Arizona teams are being recruited with extremely attractive proposals to relocate to Florida."

Governor's Special Task Force On Cactus League Baseball
Interim Report, October 7, 1988

World Champion New York Giants make a grand entry at old Municipal Stadium in 1955.
Photo courtesy of National Baseball Hall of Fame Library, Cooperstown, New York

What a difference a decade makes!

Spring training baseball is now thriving in the Grand Canyon State, with the Cactus League having posted attendance of nearly 1 million fans during its March 1999 season.

The league's journey from near calamity to survival and genuine prosperity now stands as a hallmark for how government, business and private citizens could cooperatively launch a rescue campaign.

While there are many facets of that successful endeavor, this report will focus on how Arizona and one of its Cactus League host cities, Scottsdale, escaped the threat of spring baseball oblivion. State and local task forces pinpointed the challenge and specified the blueprint for survival.

Then Governor Rose Mofford created the state panel in the late 1980s to save the springtime league, which was then about 40 years old. Eight of Major League Baseball's franchises practiced here at that time, with the other 18 choosing the East Coast's primary vacation mecca of Florida.

Joe Garagiola, Jr., general manager of the Arizona Diamondbacks, who served as vice chairman of the Mofford task force, said in a recent interview that the Cactus League was in "pretty desperate trouble" at that time. He credits former baseball commission Fay Vincent with alerting Mofford to the Florida threat and telling her, according to Garagiola, "you have to decide whether you want to keep the league."

Noting that the Cactus League had by then "evolved from a nice attraction for baseball fans in the 1950s and 1960s to a substantial industry for the state today," the task force showcased the findings of a Datapol, Inc., report:

Spring-Training Economic Impact

Chicago Cubs (Mesa)	$37.5 million
Oakland Athletics (Phoenix)	22.5 million
Milwaukee Brewers (Chandler)	22.0 million
Cleveland Indians (Tucson)	17.3 million
San Diego Padres (Yuma)	15.7 million
San Francisco Giants (Scottsdale)	15.1 million
Seattle Mariners (Tempe)	14.7million
Total	$144.8 million

The report noted that—with the exception of the Chicago Cubs—these estimates did not include the teams' spending. The study found that the Cubs spent $1.1 million while the California Angels spent $850,000 in Mesa, where they practiced for a portion of spring. The Angels, who played their home Cactus League games in Palm Springs, California, had an estimated economic impact there of $15.5 million.

"Although it would be nice to believe that the weather conditions, convenient travel, and cozy ballparks are enough to encourage a team to remain," the task force concluded in its report, "the reality of the situation is that baseball is not

just a sport—it is also a business. Business requirements for success are measured on the bottom line rather than in the bottom of the ninth. Spring training losses run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars, and all teams are actively exploring ways to offset the expenses."

Various counties and cities in Florida were then offering attractive packages to lure Arizona teams. In fact, new complexes had already been built between 1985 and 1988 for five teams: Astros, Mets, Rangers, Reds and Royals.

In the opinion of the state task force, Florida was making "offers wrapped in land deals and stadium arrangements that make a move to Florida virtually risk free, (and) interested teams can almost name their terms if they wish to leave the Cactus League."

The new-era model was in place: provide teams with extensive facilities that went far beyond the old days of small and quaint ballparks. Do so at little or no cost to the teams—often by means of public financing and free land.

In the opinion of the state task force, Arizona could ill afford to lose any of its teams: "Even the representatives of the teams whose commitment to Arizona is the strongest expressed the fear that with a relatively few defections to Florida, the competitive posture of the league would be so weakened that the remaining teams would be forced to leave in order to have an adequate spring training."

Garagiola said recently that there was a possibility of "critical mass" falling below a minimum number—thought at the time to be between four and six teams. He added that teams wanted "meaningful competition" in improved facilities that would offer a better chance to prepare for the regular season. And despite five of the Cactus League's teams being based in West Coast cities, Garagiola insisted it was possible those clubs could have re-located despite the extra distances from their hometowns.

At least one of the Cactus League communities was addressing the challenge separately and relied upon its own task force to develop a speedy response to a climate that called for emergency solutions. The Mayor's Baseball Committee in Scottsdale recognized the need to replace its 5,500-seat stadium, which was then 33 years old.

Adjacent to the community's Old Town district, Scottsdale Stadium had hosted five major league clubs over the years:

Baltimore Orioles	1956-1958
Boston Red Sox	1959-1965
Chicago Cubs	1967-78
Oakland A's	1979-81
San Francisco Giants	1982-present

Mesa's HoHoKam Park was originally constructed in 1977 for $507,000. In 1997, HoHoKam was completely rebuilt at a cost of $15 million as part of Arizona's effort to save the Cactus League.

Determined to continue its relationship with the Giants, the committee recommended a new facility that would be financed by $7 million in general obligation bonds. A portion of the funds would also be directed to upgrading minor league facilities about two miles away at Indian School Park.

The committee's final report vividly demonstrated just how far communities had to go to satisfy the demands of teams in this Arizona versus Florida competition and the new era of millionaire ballplayers. Describing a portion of the new facilities that would be required, the committee—after consulting with the Giants—proposed the following as part of its specifications and requirements:

"Major league air conditioned, carpeted clubhouse—to house at least 54 players; separate coaches' room for at least 12 coaches including lockers and stools; separate manager's office with toilet paper and shower including locker and stool; training room with adequate space for counters, cabinets and rubdown tables; trainer's office with cabinets, sinks and trainers' lockers and stools; sauna room and adjacent workout/exercise room in equal size to training room, adequate storage room for clubhouse manager with room and shelving; sinks, cabinets and equipment racks for storage/laundry, etc.; shower room with at least 12 shower heads and bathroom with adequate facilities; video-conference room near coaches' room seating 14; adequate lockers and stools and code compliant fire extinguishers; physician's office with sink and cabinets; clubhouseman's office; kitchen and snack area with double sink, shelving and cabinets; custodian areas."

"New" Phoenix Municipal Stadium opened in 1964. A $4 million renovation was completed in 1995.

Photo courtesy of The Sporting News Library and Archive, St. Louis, Missouri

In November 1989, voters approved the bonds. Immediately after the end of the 1991 spring season, the old ballpark was razed and the state-of-the-art stadium (designed by HOK Architects of Camden Yards acclaim) was built in time for use the following March. The minor league complex was also improved in line with the committee's recommendations.

Meantime, other communities followed through on some of the recommendations of the state task force that had suggested a tax program, low- or no-interest loans for spring training ventures and other state funds for individual cities to reimburse specific costs for recruiting new franchises.

In the ensuing ten years, public-private partnerships and tax initiatives have stabilized the Cactus League. Now there are ten teams—including the one represented by the expansion Arizona Diamondbacks—and brand new or refurbished facilities everywhere.

The Cleveland Indians did depart for Florida but the expansion Colorado Rockies filled the void in Tucson. That community also built a two-team complex to host the Diamondbacks and Chicago White Sox, who left Florida.

With some teams agreeing to long-term deals of up to 20 years, communities took these actions:

- The Phoenix suburb of Peoria built a dual-team setup for the Padres and Mariners.
- Tempe upgraded its Diablo Stadium for the Angels.
- Mesa built a new Hohokam Park on the same site for the Cubs.
- The Brewers departed Chandler for new facilities in Phoenix neighborhood known as Maryvale.
- Phoenix's Municipal Stadium got a facelift to preserve its relationship with the Athletics while the city also improved the nearby Papago Park complex for the A's minor leaguers.

Some of these began operation by the 1994 season and all suffered the consequences of the heart-wrenching players' strike that year. Attendance plummeted in '95 when Cactus League games initially featured replacements before concluding an abbreviated second phase after the strike was settled.

As the spring training decade concluded last March, the Cactus League celebrated attendance of 980,000—its fans back, its teams apparently content and its revenues on a healthy upward trend.

Now there's even the possibility of adding two more clubs as the Dodgers and Blue Jays pursue talks to move to a joint facility in the Phoenix area. And there's speculation the league could welcome the city of Las Vegas as a host community.

"I don't know that we need a lot more teams to be successful," Garagiola said. "I think that maybe we're close to the equilibrium point."

As to the stability of the league at the close of this decade and century, Garagiola believes vigilance is required: "For the future, cities and counties need to continue to have a close relationship with teams so the day doesn't come when communities fall asleep at the switch. I think the lesson Arizona has learned is that the league is an important asset and has real value. It was taken for granted but I don't think we're going to do that again."

However grand it may be to celebrate the league's survival and the post-strike renewal of baseball, the character of the Cactus League has substantially changed—for better or worse. Spring training, in the words of *Arizona Republic* writer Les Polk, has lost "some of its cozy, laid-back appeal" with the disappearance of rickety wooden bleachers, chain-link fences and cheap tickets.

In a piece published this past March, Polk quoted Marcel Lachemann, minor league director for the Angels, about the days gone by: "It's changed a lot. Spring training now brings in revenue. It wasn't a moneymaker back then. Society in general was more relaxed. Nowadays you don't know who's got a gun or not."

Tom Girard lives in Scottsdale and has written numerous articles about baseball and a wide variety of other subjects for national publications.

Gary Gentry's Gem

by Rodney Johnson

Courtesy of Arizona State University Sports Information Office.

On October 14, 1969, Gary Gentry pitched 6 2/3 shutout innings against the Baltimore Orioles and then got relief help from Nolan Ryan as New York beat Baltimore 5-0 to take a two-games-to-one lead in the World Series. Of course, the Mets went on to shock Baltimore and win the fall classic in five games.

While that World Series victory 30 years ago may have represented the high point of Gentry's career, the right-handed hurler performed a far more remarkable feat two years earlier in what was probably the greatest game in the history of Arizona baseball.

On Friday, May 19, Arizona State hosted the University of Arizona in the first game of a three game series that would decide the Western Athletic Conference Southern Division championship. The game, played at Mesa's Rendezvous Park, was won by ASU behind a Gary Gentry shut out. It was the second time Gentry had shut out the Wildcats in the season, both times by identical 3-0 scores.

The next day the two teams split a double header with ASU winning the afternoon contest 3-0 and dropping the nightcap 7-2. The split left both clubs with 7-5 conference records and set up a one-game playoff for the division title. ASU's overall record stood at 43-9 while U of A was at 35-14. Athletic directors Clyde Smith of ASU and Dick Clausen of Arizona tossed a coin to see which school would host the playoff. Smith won the toss for the Devils. With a day off on Sunday, the playoff was scheduled for Monday night at 8:00 p.m. at Phoenix Municipal Stadium. The winner of the game would go on to play Brigham Young University, the northern division champ, for the WAC title and a district 7 playoff bid that could lead to the College World Series.

Sun Devil's coach Bobby Winkles tabbed Gentry to start the game on the mound even though it had been only two days since his complete game four-hitter against the 'Cats. Arizona's Frank Sancet named John Hosmer, a lefty with a 7-1 record, to oppose Gentry.

An overflow crowd of 8,314 was shoehorned into Phoenix Muni to watch the longtime rivals play for the league crown. Coming into the game, Arizona was ranked ninth nationally and ASU was number 11. The *Arizona Republic* reported that, "Since Gentry has had only two days rest, coach Bobby Winkles may be forced to use either Tom Burgess or Jeff Pentland, if help is needed in the later innings." Gentry, now a Phoenix businessman, said he had other ideas. "I didn't believe in relief pitchers. I always thought you should finish what you started. Today they talk about quality starts. What the hell is that? A guy goes six innings then they go to a setup man, then to the closer. When I pitched, your starter would go until he couldn't go anymore. There was no way I was coming out of that game with Arizona until it was decided." What Gentry didn't know was that the game would last more than four hours and go on for 15 innings.

Gentry's Fifteen-Inning Masterpiece

Arizona	AB	R	H	BI	Arizona State	AB	R	H	BI
DeWald, 2b	7	2	1	0	Nelson, 2b	7	0	2	1
Hinton, lf	6	0	3	2	Davini, c	5	0	0	0
Leon, ss	6	0	0	0	Reid, cf, rf	5	0	3	0
Hall, 3b	7	0	1	0	Pentland, rf	5	0	0	0
Stitt, cf	7	0	0	0	Linville, cf	2	0	0	0
Welton, rf	3	0	1	0	Bobb, 1b	7	1	1	0
Sefferovich, rf	1	0	0	0	Detter, pr	0	1	0	0
Hunt, ph	0	0	0	0	Carpenter, lf	6	0	1	0
Worley, pr-lf	1	0	0	0	Grangaard, 3b	7	0	1	1
Wicklund, 1b	6	0	1	0	Lind, ss	7	0	3	1
McMackin, c	5	0	2	0	Gentry, p	6	1	1	0
Hosmer, p	1	0	0	0					
Brasher, p	3	0	0	0					
Totals;	**53**	**2**	**9**	**2**	**Totals:**	**57**	**3**	**12**	**3**

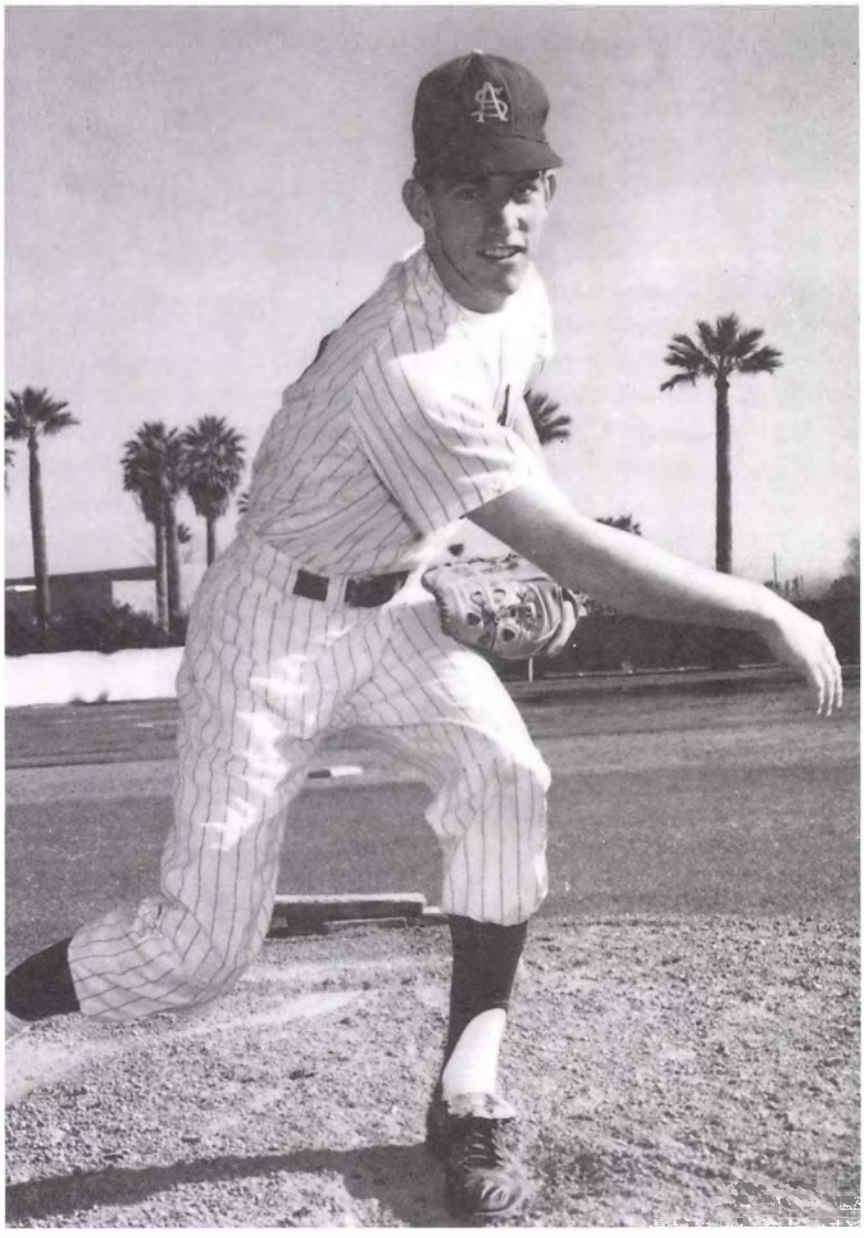
Arizona	100	010	000	000	000—2
Arizona State	000	011	000	000	001—3

E- Hall, Sefferovich 2, Lind 2, Gentry.
DP- Bobb, Lind, Bobb; Gentry, Lind, Nelson.
LOB- Arizona, 11; ASU 15.
2B- Grangaard, Lind. 3B- Nelson.
SB- Leon.
SAC- Brasher, Carpenter.

Pitching Summary

	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
Hosmer	5.1	5	2	1	3	9
Brasher (L)	9	7	1	1	1	5
Gentry (W)	15	9	2	1	5	18

WP- Gentry, Hosmer; PB- McMackin.
Umpires: Moore, Dossey, Castro, Cook.
T- 4:17 A- 8,314



Courtesy of Arizona State University Sports Information Office.

Arizona jumped out on top 1-0 in the first inning when outfielder Rich Hinton doubled to drive in Terry DeWald who had opened the game with a single and gone to second on a wild pitch. Hinton, a sophomore from Marana, was the hero of Saturday's game as he pitched a one-hitter against the Devils to force the playoff game. The Wildcats struck for another run in the fifth inning with the help of an error. Hosmer reached first base on a walk. DeWald hit a grounder to shortstop Jack Lind who stepped on second for the force and then threw wildly to first, hitting Hosmer in the head. The ball bounced into the stands and DeWald was awarded second. He then scored on Hinton's single to right to make the score 2-0.

The Sun Devils came back with a run in the bottom half of the inning when Gentry singled and scored on a triple by second baseman Fred Nelson. ASU tied the game in the sixth when Randy Bobb reached first on an error by third baseman Marty Hall, then went to second on a passed ball and scored on a double down the third base line by Dave Grangaard. Hosmer was done. He had pitched well, striking out the side in both the first and second innings and finished with nine strike-outs in 5 1/3 innings. Steve Brasher came on to pitch for the Wildcats.

On they played into the night. Each inning Winkles would ask Gentry how he felt. Every inning the answer was the same. "Fine." Before going out each inning, Gentry popped four sugar pills to give him a boost. "I don't know if they really helped or not," Gentry says today. "I thought they did at the time, so I guess that's all that matters. One thing they did for certain was keep me awake. When I got home after the game, I didn't get to sleep until about 5:00 a.m." Gentry took the last three remaining sugar tablets before he went to the mound for the 15th inning. After issuing a leadoff walk to Eddie Leon, Gentry struck out the side bringing his total to 18 for the game, a new WAC record.

John Olson, now one of three official scorers for the Diamondbacks, was there that night. "Even though we (the fans) wanted ASU to win, there was a part of us that didn't want to see the game end." Olson said. "What a great game it was."

In the bottom of the 15th, Randy Bobb opened the frame with a single to left and then went to second on Ralph Carpenter's sacrifice bunt. Gentry sat in the dugout thinking about not having any more sugar pills and hoping that the Devils could end the game right there. "I was thinking that no matter what, I was going to finish that game. I didn't want to have to go out there again, but I was ready to if it came to that." remembered Gentry. Then at 17 minutes past midnight, Jack Lind smashed a drive to deep right field to score the winning run and end the greatest game in the history of ASU baseball. Bedlam broke loose as the Devils mobbed Lind. Winkles said "Considering the pressure, that has to be the greatest pitching performance I've ever seen. I'd have to say he's (Gentry) the greatest pitcher I've ever had."

That night Gentry threw 208 pitches, struck out 18, gave up two runs, one earned, on nine hits and walked five. He wasn't through. The following Saturday, Gentry went the distance in a 4-3 win against BYU to wrap up the WAC title.

. He struck out 16 in that game. In the district 7 playoffs, Gentry won again, beating Air Force. In the College World Series he won two more games including another iron man performance in a complete game, 14-inning, 4-3 win against Stanford. The two marathon performances remain the longest outings for pitchers in ASU history. The Devils went on to win their second College World Series and Gentry was named to the CWS team as well as being named as an All-American and the 1967 Sporting News College Player of the Year. In all, Gentry went 17-1 with 13 complete games, six shut outs, a 1.14 ERA and a school record 229 strikeouts.

At Phoenix College in 1966, Gentry's team won the Jr. College National Championship, then the title at ASU in 1967 followed by minor league titles at Williamsport of the Eastern League and Jacksonville of the International League. Of course he followed those up with the 1969 World Series victory with the Mets. And which was the biggest thrill? "Of course it's nice to win, but none of them was really that big of a thrill." said Gentry. "I always expected to win so it was more a a shock when I lost as opposed to a thrill when I won."

Injuries finally ended his Major League career in 1975 but up until then, from his days at Camelback High School to pitching for the Atlanta Braves, Gentry was always ready to take the ball. While the Sun Devils were celebrating their dramatic win over Arizona, Gentry was in the shower. Finally Winkles called him out to be with the team. Clad only in a towel, Gary slyly smiled and said "What do you want coach? Want me to play a little catch with someone?" He was still ready.

Rick Monday and Barry Bonds
Courtesy of Arizona State University Sports Information Office.

Arizona State University Baseball Notes

- Arizona State outfielder Rick Monday was the first player selected in major league baseball's first draft in 1965. Monday was picked by the Kansas City A's and he signed with Charles O. Finley's club for $104,000.
- The Sun Devils have had three No. 1 overall picks in the amateur draft, more than any other school in the country. The picks: Monday (1965); left-handed pitcher Floyd Bannister (Houston in 1976); and third baseman Bob Horner (Atlanta in 1978).
- Overall, twenty-one players from ASU have been selected as first round picks.
- Only 18 drafted players have ever jumped directly to the majors. Two were Sun Devils: Eddie Bane with the Minnesota Twins in 1973 and Bob Horner with the Atlanta Braves in 1978.
- Arizona State University has made 22 postseason appearances since 1964, 18 College World Series appearances and won the national championship five times. The Sun Devils won the College World Series under head coach Bobby Winkles in 1965, 1967 and 1969; and under head coach Jim Brock in 1977 and 1981.
- In 1994, *Baseball America* named four ASU Sun Devils to its an All-Time College All-Star Team: 2B Bob Horner (1976-78), SS Alan Bannister (1970-72), pitcher Eddie Bane (1971-73) and pitcher Floyd Bannister (1974-76).

Jerry Kindall on Wildcat Baseball

By Dave Fanucchi

Jerry Kindall retired as University of Arizona's head baseball coach in 1996 after an illustrious 24-year career. Kindall led the Wildcats to three national championships (in 1976, 1980 and 1986) and finished with a 861-580 career record. Twelve Kindall-coached squads reached the post-season and five played in the College World Series. Kindall, who starred collegiately at the University of Minnesota, is the only man to play for and coach a college baseball national championship team. He also played in the majors for eight seasons with the Chicago Cubs, Cleveland Indians and Minnesota Twins. In the following interview, Coach Kindall reflects on his career as skipper of the Arizona Wildcats.

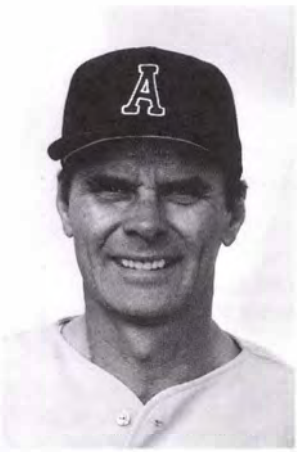


Photo Credit: Robert F. Walker

Question: You were the head coach at Arizona for 24 years. What was your biggest thrill?

Coach: I think our biggest thrill was our first national championship in 1976. Arizona had been under Frank Sancet, a tremendous coach and a distinguished gentleman. He was very successful and they got to Omaha nine times but had not won [the College World Series] . . . When I was hired, when Frank retired, . . . it was very clear to me that the University expected and wanted very badly a national championship. So, in 1976, when we did win the College World Series, I think that was the biggest thrill for me and for the entire University and the community.

Question: You won over 800 games at Arizona. What was your secret to success as a head coach?

Coach: Well, it's no great secret. The reason I believe our teams did well and we won championships was that I took the teaching that I received from Dick Seibert, who was my college coach at the University of Minnesota and I was his assistant coach for five years before I came here to Arizona. I learned from Dick to be very well organized and prepare carefully. And also and perhaps this is most important, to take nothing for granted—that the players learn the fundamentals of baseball from the very ground up. And so, I wanted our team to be featured by fundamentally sound baseball and that's what I taught and I credit Dick Seibert for impressing on me the importance of those two elements of coaching. Teach the fundamentals and then be very well organized and prepare carefully for every practice and game.

Question: Who was the best player you coached at Arizona and do you have one favorite player?

Coach: I have to answer that with two players. The best all-around players at Arizona in the 24 years I coached were Dave Stegman, who was a four-year letterman starting with 1973 through 1976 and was the stalwart of our national championship team in 1976. And then in 1980, Terry Francona. Those two players had it all. They could run. They could throw. They could hit and they could hit with power and they were outstanding fielders. Both of them were outfielders. So, those two I believe were the best all-around players that I coached here at Arizona.

As far as who was my favorite player, I really have many, many emotional favorites. Guys that I deeply admire who practiced hard and played hard and were stalwart men and were gentlemen. But to single out one or two or three would be unfair to all the others. I have many, many emotional favorites.

Dave Stegman
Courtesy of University of Arizona Sports Information Department

Question: What was the best team in your opinion you ever coached at Arizona?

Coach: The strongest team and best team was the 1974 Wildcats. That was the second year that we were here and my excellent assistant coaches at that time were Jim Wing, our pitching coach, and Mark Johnson, our hitting coach and outfield coach. . . . We had a record of 58 and 4 going into the regional playoffs and we were bumped off two straight by Northern Colorado in a tremen-

dous upset and they deserved to win. Northern Colorado played very well. It was at their place so we were eliminated before we got to the College World Series. But for talent and for every element of a successful team, I think that that 1974 team had it.

That 1974 team served as the foundation for the 1976 championship because we had a good many sophomores in the line up in 1974 that went on to become seniors in 1976. I'm talking about Stegman and Powers and Ron Hassey and others. So they were the solid foundation for our first College World Series champions.

Question: Your 1976 team was the first in any sport at the University of Arizona to win a national championship. What made that team special?

Coach: Well, what made the team special is that they had a vision in 1974. As I've indicated, we were an outstanding team but we were bumped off. And then they had a vision and a commitment—a crusade, if you will—to get back to the College World Series. In 1975, we were beaten in a 1-0 game by USC, the eventual national champions, for the right to go to Omaha and that was in the regionals. So that was another bitter disappointment. But in 1976, it all came together and that's what made that team special. It was a core group of players that had been [here in] 1974, 1975 and 1976 and they simply would not be denied in 1976.

Question: Who were your standout performers on the 1976 ballclub?

Coach: I do want to single out several. I've already talked about Dave Stegman, but then our MVP in the College World Series was Steve Powers, who was a pitcher and designated hitter, one of the toughest and most hard-nosed players that I ever coached. He richly deserved the MVP there because he pitched and hit us to the national championship. But I believe the single player that got us over the hump was Ron Hassey. Ron Hassey had been an All-American third baseman in 1974 as a sophomore and then played very well again at third base as a junior in 1975. But we needed a catcher for that 1976 team. Jim Wing, who became my associate head coach shortly thereafter, suggested that we make Ron a catcher. Well, that meant Ron had to learn an entirely new position as a senior. He took that challenge and Jim Wing worked tirelessly [with Hassey] to convert him to a catcher. By the time the 1976 season got underway, he was our catcher and he became, I think in the College World Series, the single most important player behind the plate. He caught every inning. As I recall, we were beaten in the first game in the College World Series in an extra inning game by of all people, Arizona State, a 7-6 loss. The next morning, in an elimination game, we had to come out in tremendously humid and hot weather to play Oklahoma. And Ron Hassey was the key behind the plate that day. . . . I'll be forever grateful to Ron Hassey for being willing to change positions from having been an All-American at third base and a pro prospect, to be willing to change positions, go behind the plate, the dirtiest most underrated player on the field, I believe. He was simply outstanding that year, and particularly in the College World Series. He went on to catch 13 years in the big leagues, by the way.

Question: Coach, what was the best team you ever played against and who was the best player you ever saw play against you?

Coach: Well, the best team, it's hard to isolate one team. Frankly, the USC teams in the 1970's that we played against and they went on to win the national championships, often times in the 1970's under Rod Dedeaux. They were always tough. They have tremendous talent. They had the Steve Kemps and the Dave Kingmans and the Roy Smalley, Jr.'s and so on. Those are some names that come to mind. Then the Arizona State teams, in our own conference, that we had to play at least six times every year, were tough. I think one of the best teams that I can remember facing up and down the lineup was the Arizona State team, I forget which year, but it was when Barry Bonds was a junior and they had an outstanding array of talent and they were very, very tough to beat.

Question: Is there one opposing player who stands out?

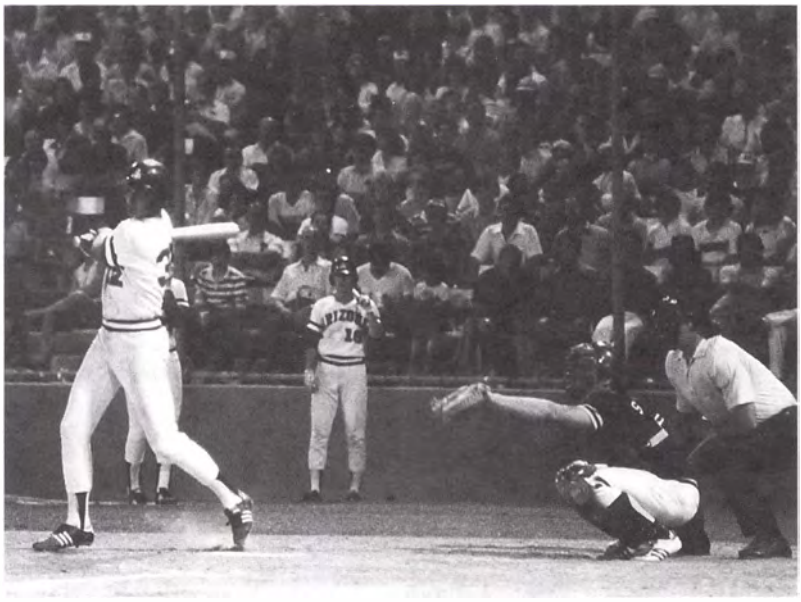
Coach: Well, because he's so fresh in my mind and such a folk hero now—Mark McGwire. When he played with USC as a freshman, he was a pitcher-designated hitter. He didn't trouble us as a pitcher. We were able to get hits off him. But then as a sophomore and junior, he absolutely tore this league apart with his long ball. And wouldn't you know, on the same team was Randy Johnson. When Mark McGwire was first baseman for the USC Trojans, Randy Johnson was on the mound. [To name one] outstanding player . . . is hard. I would really need to go through the records because there were so many outstanding players in our conference, the southern division of the Pac 10. But I guess I would have to give the nod for the moment to Mark McGwire.

Question: You faced two very talented pitchers for Eastern Michigan in the 1976 title game, Bob Owchinko and Bob Welch. Do you recall facing a tougher pair of hurdlers in any game?

Coach: Not in any one game. They were outstanding players and shortly thereafter, they signed big contracts. Owchinko, as I recall, [signed] with the Padres and Welch with the Dodgers. . . But by the time we faced them in the final game of the College World Series in 1976, their arms were a little bit tired and we had a fresh arm (Steve Powers)

to go in . . . the title game. So, they both pitched. Owchinko started, Welch came in and relieved him. And even though they were tired after the long College World Series, at that time, they were outstanding. So to answer the question, no. In one game, facing two such outstanding pitchers, I don't think there was any better in my coaching career.

Question: You mentioned your 1980 championship team was led by Terry Francona. Describe him as a player.



Terry Francona
Photo Credit: Joan Vitale-Rohlwing

Coach: Well, describing him as a player is easy. He could do it all. I played with his father, Tito Francona, in Cleveland for three years and so I knew Terry as a little boy. In fact, he and my oldest child Betsy were of the same age and they would play together here in spring training in Tucson. The first thing I remember about Terry as a child was he threw sand in my daughter's eyes and made her cry. They were about two-years old. But Tito called me when Terry was a sophomore at New Brighton, Pennsylvania and he said I've got a boy that's a better player than I was. He says he's as good a hitter as I am and he runs a lot better. So, I began recruiting Terry when he was a sophomore in high school. When he came here to Arizona, he was an immediate starter. He started in left field for three years and absolutely dominated the College World Series in 1980. He was chosen MVP. He was also chosen the Golden Spikes Award winner that year in 1980.

Question: Did it surprise you that Francona went on to manage in the majors?

Coach: I was surprised at first when he began to manage in the minor leagues in A-Ball in South Bend, Indiana, I believe it was, where he began. I thought that he would be very suited in the front office. He is a very bright young man. I wondered when he went on the field, would he become a coach some day at the big league level. I could see that. But a manager, I was surprised when he became a manager. I thought he was better suited at the front office or as a coach. But now, of course, he's proven himself as a tremendous manager for the Philadelphia Phillies and I'm very, very proud of Terry Francona for many reasons. He's a great baseball man. He's a successful manager but more than that, he's a very loving and devoted husband and father.

Question: Is there one game at the University of Arizona that stands out that in your mind as the most memorable?

Coach: Yes. That's an easy question to answer. It was in 1986, the first game of the College World Series against Maine. We battled back from a 7-0 deficit and in the bottom of the ninth, with two outs, runner on first, two strikes on the hitter, Dave Shermet hit a dramatic home run over the scoreboard to win the game, 8-7. And so, after battling back that far to get the first victory, which is very important in the College World Series, to get off to a winning start. The first two years that we won the College World Series, in 1976 and 1980, we lost the first game. And this time, we won the first game and Dave Shermet's dramatic home run, I believe, is the most memorable moment, for me in all of my coaching.

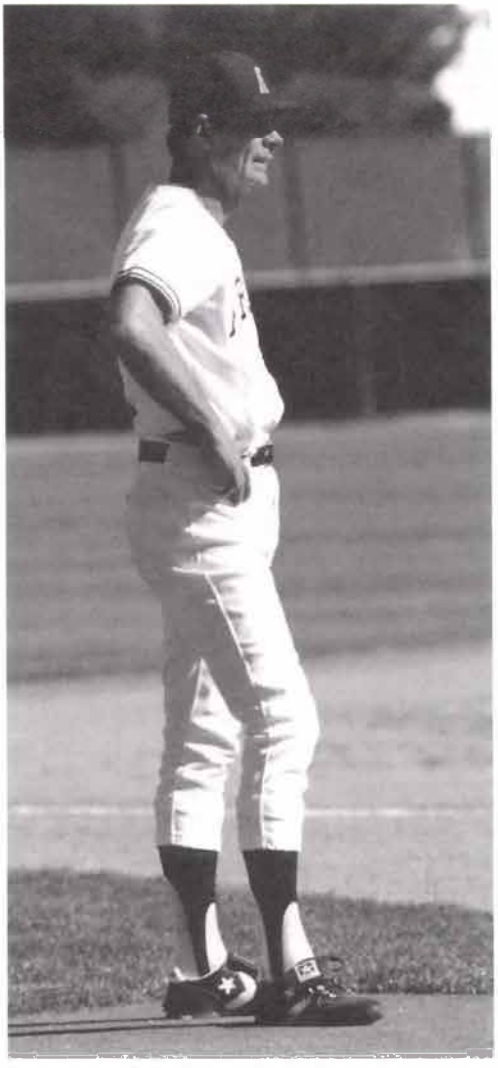
Question: Is there one player you coached that ultimately surprised you with his success on the professional level?

Coach: Yes, pleasantly surprised and very proud of this young man—Casey Candaele who went on to play and is still playing. He was on our 1980 team with Terry Francona. He went on to play seven or eight years in the big leagues, I believe. He was kind of a utility man. He can do it all, a little switch-hitter. Little guy, doesn't have much power, can play the infield, can play the outfield, and he's still playing in Triple-A to this day and I really didn't think that Casey had that kind of ability. In fact, he doesn't have a lot of ability but he has a tremendous heart and a real dedicated player.

Question: The Arizona-Arizona State rivalry has always been a bitter one on the field. How did you approach the Sun Devils as an opponent?

Coach: Well, those many years from 1973 until Jim Brock died, I believe it was 1995, Jim always had a great grasp of the game. He was a very innovative coach and you never knew what to expect. He did things as a surprise and they were hard to prepare for. He also was a very effective recruiter and had always outstanding talent. So, they were

tough games to prepare for and we had some really knock-down drag-out battles in the rivalry when we started coaching, Jim Brock succeeded Bobby Winkles and I succeeded Frank Sancet. And there was a bitter rivalry with a lot of hatred in the stands, among the fans, not among the players. Bobby Winkles and Frank Sancet would not have permitted that and Jim Brock and I did not like our players to get involved in such a hateful kind of approach to one another. So, for the first five or six years...there were fights in the stands and full house crowds, 10,000 people, that kind of thing. And a lot of enmity and bitterness came out of that rivalry. Jim Brock and I sat down in one off season and together we tried to bring some civility and some moderation to that by communicating to the fans through the PA, by communicating through handouts at the stands, by talking through the press and media, to bring this to the proper place—that it wasn't a civil war because there had been bloodshed, more in the stands than on the field, but that it was after all a college athletic contest. In time, the feelings began to moderate in the stands and we brought it back to a better, more healthy level. But they were always tough games with Arizona State and highly charged with emotion. It always seemed that when we were in the old Western Athletic Conference together, it inevitably came down to the last conference series with them as to who would win the championship and advance through conference championships to the regional finals.



Jerry Kindall
Photo Credit: Robert F. Walker

Question: How has college baseball changed in your mind since the time you started at Arizona in 1973?

Coach: Well, the biggest change has been the use of the aluminum bat. The first several years I coached at Arizona, we were still using the wood bat and in 1974, I think, I first saw the aluminum bat used in a college game. It was optional. You could use wood or aluminum. We used wood through the 1974 season. 1975, we began to use the aluminum. 1976, we were full-fledged aluminum throughout college baseball. And that did change the game very much.

Question: You won your first college championship using aluminum bats?

Coach: As I recall, yes. Yes, we were using the aluminum bat at that time in 1976. Up to that time, we were using mostly wood. So, that's the biggest change on the field. Off the field, it's been the reduction in scholarships and NCAA control of how much aid you could give. When I first started coaching, there was no limit on scholarships so the schools that wanted to emphasize baseball—USC, Texas, Florida, Florida State, Miami, Arizona, Arizona State—there were probably 10 or 12 schools that had baseball as a major program and they budgeted in such a way. Well, then the NCAA began to take control and limit scholarships in all sports and it changed the domination of college baseball from a handful of schools and that was Arizona, Arizona State, USC, Miami and maybe Texas and some others. But it changed it to a more level playing field and no longer could Rod Dedeaux or Jerry Kindall or Jim Brock or Cliff Gustafson have a bench that was real strong by giving a lot of aid. You could get in players and give them virtual full scholarships so you had a strong program from player one all the way down to player 28 or 29 but then the parity [came] and I think it was a good thing. I'm not complaining about that. I think college baseball needed parity and now we've seen it in the last 10, 12 or maybe longer, maybe the last 20 years [and] other schools [have] come forth...LSU is one. Cal State Fullerton is another. Stanford, as a third, has had a strong, year-in year-out, baseball program.

Dave Fanucchi is the Administrative Assistant and Director of Publications for USA Baseball in Tucson. He previously served as the Media Relations Director for Major League Baseball's Arizona Fall League in 1998 and he assisted in the St. Louis Cardinals Media Relations department in 1996 and 1997.

Arizona Baseball Firsts

By Mike Holden

First Professional Minor League Game

Minor league baseball debuted in Arizona on April 27, 1915 when the Tucson Old Pueblos defeated the Phoenix Senators, 10-2, at Elysian Groves Field in Tucson. The Old Pueblos and the Senators were members of the new Rio Grande Valley Association. The six-team league, which also included Albuquerque, Las Cruces, Douglas and El Paso, folded on July 5, 1915 after only 59 games. Pro baseball returned to Arizona in 1928 when Phoenix, Tucson, Bisbee and Miami joined the Arizona State League.

First Major League Team to Play in Arizona

The Chicago White Sox played an exhibition game in Yuma on March 30, 1909. The White Sox defeated a local team, 9-1, in front of a crowd on 1,000. The game coincided with the opening of the Laguna Dam, an irrigation system that supplied Yuma area farmers with Colorado River water.

First Game Between Two Major League Clubs

National League pennant-winning New York Giants and the Chicago White Sox played at Bisbee's Warren Park in November 1913 during a post-season exhibition tour. The Giants prevailed over the White Sox, 9-1. The Giants roster included future Hall of Famer Christy Mathewson and Olympic hero Jim Thorpe.

First Team to Conduct Spring Training In Arizona

The Detroit Tigers trained at Riverside Park in Phoenix for one spring in 1929. The Detroit spring training entourage included manager Bucky Harris, two coaches, two scouts, a business manager, three newspaper correspondents, two photographers and 38 players. Two future Hall of Famers trained in Phoenix with the Tigers—second baseman Charlie Gehringer and OF/1B Harry Heilman. The Tigers played only two exhibition games in Phoenix against other major league teams in 1929. In the first contest on March 29, a crowd of 2,000 watched the Tigers beat the Pittsburgh Pirates, 7-4. The following day, a crowd of 3,500 packed Riverside Park to watch the Tigers come from behind to beat the Chicago Cubs, 11-10.

First Arizona-Born Player in the Majors

Right-handed pitcher Lee William "Flame" Delhi, who was born in Harqua Hala, Arizona on November 5, 1892, became the first Arizona-born major leaguer when he appeared for the Chicago White Sox on April 16, 1912, one day after the Titanic disaster. Delhi's big league stint was a short one—he appeared in only one major league contest. His major league career line: three innings, seven hits, six runs, three earned runs, three walks, two strikeouts and a 9.00 ERA.

First Arizona Native to Homer in the Majors

On July 2, 1934, New York Giants outfielder Hank Leiber became the first Arizona native to hit a major league homer. Leiber also holds the record for most career home runs by an Arizona native. During his ten-year big league career, the Phoenix-born Leiber connected for 101 roundtrippers.

First Arizona-Born to Manage in the Majors

Phoenix-born Solly Hemus was the first Arizona native to manage in the majors when he skippered the St. Louis Cardinals from 1959 to 1961. Hemus, who was born on April 17, 1923, finished with a 190-192 career managerial record.

Only Arizona Native to Win Cy Young Award

Prescott's John Denny won the National League's Cy Young award in 1983. Denny, who attended Yavapai College, went 19-6 with a 2.37 ERA for the Philadelphia Phillies to earn the honor.

First Arizona School to Win College World Series

Arizona State University won its first College World Series in 1965. Future major leaguers Sal Bando, Duffy Dyer and Rich Monday led the Sun Devils to a 54-8 season record. ASU defeated Ohio State in the final game to clinch the national crown.

Desert Diamonds: The Arizona Fall League

By George King

Making the journey from towns and cities like Chattanooga and Dunedin, hordes of athletic and energetic twenty-somethings have been working non-stop since hope-filled, pre-spring workouts in February. They're destined not just for diminuitive crowds of the most faithful followers as is often the case in the minor leagues, but also a cornucopia of potential employers. Although most names are unfamiliar and unanticipated, some will soon be mass-marketed as prospects to America's pastime. For many it is here, on the desert diamonds of the Valley of the Sun, that the realization of the dream to be a big league baseball player is finally realized. It is enough to make one wonder if Branch Rickey himself did not have a hand in it.

From Labor Day to Thanksgiving, baseball, America's perfect gem of a sport, presents an answer to who will carry the torch of the coming generations. Since 1992, the Arizona Fall League, a brilliant research-and-development leg of Major League Baseball's owners and clubs, has produced more than half of the professional players who are featured in their newly-revived venues as if inspired by the pioneer of player development and the open-tryout. In a region known for its propensity for being a staging arena for transition, the talent blooms bright like the saguaro cactus during June in the open and very wild desert between Tucson and Flagstaff.

Valley-dictorian

Do not get this gathering of wide-eyed students of the game confused with some future Nike-peddlers. There is work to be done. And plenty of homework. In every season since that 1992 start-up, the league has graduated at least one player who has gone on to climb to the top of the list of newcomers as one of the two most lauded freshmen in the major leagues, including Mike Piazza—the most prized alumnus yet.

Piazza, the 61st selection in the 62nd round and 1,390th overall pick by the Los Angeles Dodgers in the June 1988 Free Agent Draft, is the epitome of the program. Although a tremendous specimen for the game, the Pennsylvania-native was not given much hope to be the marqueé product he has now become. But maybe his graduation from Phoenixville (PA) High School the previous year was an omen of things to come.

Coming up through one of the grand game's most respected organizations, his development was slow and precise. The Fall League was a scheduled stop only when he began to show uncommon promise. Most players who make an appearance in Arizona are top draftees and up-and-coming developers with a lot to lose for their teams. Piazza was obviously not. His take was to build on what his work ethic had uncovered—a-homer-happy bat and discipline at the plate. With that kind of enthusiasm, he captivated scouts and fans alike by batting .291 with three homers and 23 RBI to help lead the Sun Cities Solar Sox to the AFL championship.

In the seasons following his trip to Phoenix, Piazza exploded onto the big league baseball stage, immediately earning the National League's Rookie of the Year award in 1993, when he received all 28 first place votes and the ninth-ever unanimous selection in what was the 44th year of the coveted trophy. Only Johnny Bench, Thurman Munson, Earl Williams, Carlton Fisk, Benito Santiago, and Sandy Alomar, Jr. had won the award in either league as catchers. In every season since, he has challenged for NL MVP honors, and is the only player in the history of AFL to have his jersey retired. He's also the only known former player to ever be a winner on television's gameshow "Jeopardy."

Of course, his recent baseball lottery jackpot was something of a story as well—to the tune of $91 million.

In Fall League seasons since, Piazza has been joined by then-unheralded prospects like Nomar Garciaparra, Derek Jeter, Todd Hollandsworth, Marty Cordova, Ben Grieve, and Bob Hamelin, all who cut their teeth with help from the league, and would later be named ROY winners.

In the course of discussions about the relatively young experiment, arguments can be made that virtually *all* of the players in the big leagues also played in Double-A leagues or appeared in Rookie League camps.

That, for the most part, is true. However, the rate of attrition from the game at other levels is dramatic in context. As if to answer those critics, year after year the Fall League seems to hedge that rhetoric by being represented by the best of those fertile harvests. The cream rises in the Southwest. And more often than not it is manifested later in awesome surroundings.

Fall League meets Fall Classic

Game Four of the 1997 World Series was not the first time Cleveland Indians bulldog starting pitcher Jaret Wright had faced Tony Saunders of the Florida Marlins. Ten months earlier, in one of the last games of the 1996 Arizona Fall League season, the starting pitchers had battled under slightly different circumstances. Saunders, a first-round pick for the Marlins in their expansion draft a few years before, and who had never pitched above Double-A ball, was in the Valley to learn how to handle his control struggles. Wright, son of former major league pitcher Clyde Wright, was on the fast track to Jacobs Field. While the crowd that day was sparse (215 total paid), Saunders shunned away eight hits and three earned runs to out-dual Wright, who lasted just three innings. Typical for any given Fall League season, it was a bright, sunshiny, 80-degree December day.

October 22, 1997, was a world away. 45,000 celebrants crammed the yard in Cleveland amid winter conditions and 15-degree wind chill temperatures to witness the fourth of what would be a seven-game Series. Bundled up in the heaviest garments available and thawed with hot coffee, Saunders and Wright would now lead their upstart clubs into competition of the highest caliber.

Wright was masterful. He surrendered just three runs on five hits, striking out five to lead the Tribe to a 10-3 win over Saunders, who had struggled through only a pair of unsuccessful innings to suffer the defeat.

Unlike the Fall League, which saw Jaret Wright's Scottsdale Scorpions claim the AFL title, Tony Saunders had the last say when his Marlins charged to a four games-to-three world championship. This million-to-one had come in and in exactly the fashion the design was supposed to bring about.

Proving Grounds

Back in 1997, a five-year checkup found the league a remarkable success. The '97 All-Star Game in Cleveland had five AFL alumni: Shawn Estes, Justin Thompson, Jeff Cirillo, Garciaparra and, of course, Piazza. Some other former players who were in the throes of brilliant seasons that year are now common names: Troy Percival of the Anaheim Angels, Tony Clark of the Detroit Tigers, Jeromy Burnitz of the Milwaukee Brewers, Rusty Greer of the Texas Rangers, and San Diego Padres starting pitcher Joey Hamilton.

Throughout the growing years there were unique stories. NBA superstar Michael Jordan received a surprising invitation to the league in his unlikely pursuit of a Major League dream in 1994. His attempts were thwarted by the awesome talent that he faced and he struggled with lackluster numbers, although quadrupling the crowd totals in every park he played in, much to the delight of the enterprising league office. The Arizona Diamondbacks' $10 million gamble on Travis Lee began in 1997 as he made his professional debut with the Scottsdale Scorpions. In 1996, St. Louis manager Tony La Russa and two busloads of Cardinals' brass watched as Olympian Braden Looper donned the Scorpions uniform in his first professional start.

There is definitely a global flair, too. Seattle's Makato Suzuki, the Yankees' Katsuhiro Maeda, and LA's Chan Ho Park have each represented their Pacific Rim countries during stints in the league—complete with the usual media onslaught. Throw in Aussie Shayne Bennett and Latin players like Roland Arrojo, a defector from Cuba, then marvel at the international pertinence the game maintains.

Realtime reality

Sampling any given game from the late-1998 National League season schedule defines the impact the development in the AFL has had on the Major Leagues. On August 16, 1998 the Philadelphia Phillies, whose current lineups sometimes include seven or eight former Fall Leaguers, downed the Colorado Rockies at Coors Field. The expected swollen scoreboard is not important. What is impressive is the offensive contributions former AFL players made in the game: 11 hits, a pair of doubles, a couple of home runs, including a grand slam, and nine RBI. As someone once said, "something is definitely right here!"

Reading old Fall League rosters is like reciting a rotisserie lineup. Ryan Klesko of the Atlanta Braves. Darin Erstad of the Anaheim Angels. Chan Ho Park of the Los Angeles Dodgers. Todd Helton of the Colorado Rockies. Chris Carpenter of the Toronto Blue Jays. Bill Mueller of the San Francisco Giants. The list of players who have advanced through this new-found brainchild of baseball's synergists continues to grow. But how did it begin?

Genius Understood

The roots of the Fall League go back several years, when the Major Leagues wanted to create some kind of off-season league that met their increasing expectations. A concern was that with some of the very best ball players going to play winter ball out of the country, such as in the Caribbean, evaluation of the process was essentially non-existent. If the major leagues created a league that it could govern and monitor, it would be better organized. Another factor was sending the best prospects to a regulation system, so that if a player was injured or hurt, proper care and treatment would be on hand. With the Arizona Fall League, managers, coaches, scouts and league officials could actively participate, and could be held accountable.

Aside from the superior level of play and objective for invited players to accelerate a classification, prospective managers and umpires spend their "winters" in Arizona to

better develop their skills just as eagerly. For former major league players and minor league managers who aspire to be big league managers, this is a place for them to gain critical experience. Dusty Baker is a great example of a field manager who had not had managerial experience until he managed in the league in '92 to gain the necessary seasoning. After impressing Giants owner Peter McGowan of his abilities, he promptly became field manager where he remains a fixture and a thorn in the side of opponents. The following year, Baker was named the National League Manager of the Year—the first representative from the league to hold that honor—after just its second year! Terry Francona, manager of the Philadelphia Phillies, and Jerry Manuel from the Chicago White Sox are among others who recently graduated to eventually lead clubs in the big leagues after spending time in this league.

The Infrastructure

Each August, the major league clubs hold a position draft to determine the players that best represent their objectives and development needs and who will get the most out of the Fall League. As the farm-to-market super-highway continues to change, Double-A and Triple-A minor league players make up the majority of the rosters, although each club can opt to send one player considered a Class-A player in their organization. From this perspective, there's a draft for each team, and then each of the participating clubs have a position draft.

The eligibility rules to play in the AFL are simple. The roster size is 30 players per team. Each major league organization is required to provide six players subject to certain requirements: All Triple-A and Double-A players are eligible, provided the players are on at least a Double-A roster no later than July 28; one player below the Double-A level is allowed per Major League team; one foreign player is allowed, as long as the player does not reside in a country which participates in winter ball, as part of the Caribbean Confederation or the Australian winter league; no players with more than one year of credited Major League service as of August 31 are eligible, except a team may select one player picked in the most recently concluded Major League Rule 5 draft and to be eligible, players on minor league disabled lists must be activated at least 45 days before the conclusion of their respective seasons.

From these parameters, clubs are free to name whatever prospects they choose. And, for the most part, the league has become a showcase for organizations to match their best talent with one another.

The Fall League is primarily a forum for professional growth and improvement for the best the ol' game has to offer. It is now a bona fide forging point from raw athletic ability to skilled baseball talent, and it is producing in impressive numbers. The league is run by the Office of the Commissioner of Baseball for a reason: it is a vital resource for the game's immediate future. The players who have come through the league are convinced of its importance. It remains a desired assignment not only for its exposure, but because it is an indication that the players' aspirations are being taken seriously. At any given game, a fan can bump into Kevin Towers talking with Davey Johnson or encounter Gerry Hunsicker conferring with Frank Robinson. As a result, Scottsdale has become a virtual hotbed for trade talk, meetings, luncheons, dinners, and other important gatherings.

In recent years, the promotions surrounding the games have gotten better and have included appearances by virtually every living legend of the game: Hank Aaron, Stan Musial, Willie Mays, George Brett, etc., all of whom have had their say about what is now available to modern players that was never an option to them—to their disadvantage in some cases. The appearances have been made largely in part by the presence of Robinson, of the Hall of Fame Robinsons, who serves the league as director of baseball operations—a collateral duty from his year-long responsibilities as special assistant to the Commissioner.

Baseball has obviously embraced what the fickle and unaware Phoenix fans have not, although even they make a presence at times. Truly, there may have never been a finer representation of what is to come in America's game than there is every year in the Fall League. Making the trip to the spacious, and for the most part brand new, ballparks in the league has become a pilgrimage for many fans from the Northeast and Midwest during the chilling late-fall months. A lot of business is tended to and new names are taken back home to be brought out in hot stove trade speculation and rumors. It will take years for the latest stories to play out, as others have in the past. But the game will continue to grow with vitality thanks to plenty of that nourishing Southwest sunshine.

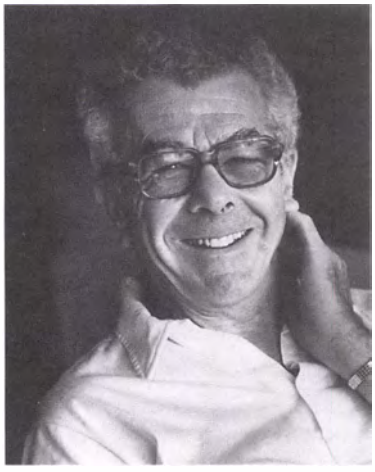
Now if we could just get the game back in our nation's capital, we might have something.

George King was the director of media relations for the Arizona Fall League in 1997. Last season, George worked as an adminstrative assistant in the Pacific Coast League office.

"You're A Fan"

By Mark Harris

Before the Arizona Diamondbacks' inaugural Opening Day on March 31, 1998, author Mark Harris, Arizona's poet laureate of baseball, wrote this fanciful essay focusing on the undercurrent of resentment among many Arizona baseball fans and one fan's struggle to accept the new ball club. A version of this story originally appeared in the Mesa Tribune *on March 31, 1998. Reprinted with permission of the author.*



Good old Jones claimed from the beginning that "the baseball thing," as he called it, had been jammed through. The politicians had been bought and the public had been deceived. Jones had neither forgiven the politicians nor ceased to yearn for the enlightenment of the defrauded masses.

His friend Gussie told him there wasn't any sense in fighting "the baseball thing." "It's going to be a good thing in every way," Gussie said.

Jones replied, "We shouldn't be selling out democracy for a baseball team."

Early in 1998, Gussie tried to sell Jones a bargain share in a season ticket: twenty-five games, twenty-five bucks a game. Jones declined to buy. "The trouble with you," Gussie said, "you're not a fan anymore. You don't go to games."

"Certainly I go to games. I go to high school games and I go to college games and I go down the street from my house and watch the great softball games the 16-year-old women play on two beautiful ballfields there."

"That's not baseball, that's girls. Nobody goes to those games."

"I'm not nobody and I go, and the mothers of the players go, and the fathers go when they can."

"Well, you're just not a fan."

Big-league baseball was on the way to Phoenix, requiring only a stadium to play in. Phoenix had many fine ball parks everywhere, but none could accommodate big-league crowds—fifty thousand baseball-hungry, baseball-mad, fervent, ardent, screaming, passionate, hollering crowds smashing down the gates from April to October, cheering on those Diamondbacks (as they were soon named) to victory and fame, proving to the world that Phoenix was a big-league city. Jones said, "Are we really going to allow an immense nuisance of an ugly ball park right here in beautiful downtown Phoenix?"

"It's going to be a beautiful baseball park," Gussie said.

"I never saw a beautiful baseball park," Jones replied. "Ball parks are by definition cement and steel."

"The grass is always beautiful," said Jones's friend.

"Grow the grass," said Jones, "bury the steel and cement."

Some of Jones's friends were becoming his enemies.

After a passage of time the structure was built. It gave lots of people work. It was named for a bank. A former friend said to Jones, "Now that it's done I predict that you're going to be there Opening Day, March 31, like everybody else," and Jones replied, "No, I'll make you my own prediction." Fans love predictions. They want to know the future ahead of time. "I'm predicting," Jones said, "that I will not be there in the park named for a bank on Opening Day, March 31. You're going to have to open the damn thing without me."

His friend said, "I don't understand you. You used to be a baseball fan."

Jones had predicted accurately. On March 31, 1998, he was absent from Opening Day at Bank One Ballpark. Nor was he in attendance at any game at Bank One Ballpark during April 1998 or May 1998, or June or July or August of that year.

As for the Diamondbacks, in mid-April they led the league. April heroes arose whose names nobody had known in March. One day in April a Diamondbacks pitcher pitched a no-hit game, and on another day in the same month a Diamondbacks outfielder hit three home runs.

However, the Diamondbacks failed to keep pace. They dropped from first place to the second division, thus disappointing the fans who had from the outset forgiven them for the bought politicians and their tricky defrauding of the public.

In June 1998, the fans began to focus their attention on

Photo Credit: Arizona Diamondbacks

the features of the stadium they had ignored in their earlier period of optimistic forgiveness. They recited their discomforts. Ticket prices were too high. Parking was difficult or impossible. The lavatories were repulsive. Refreshments were too expensive and the waiting lines too long. (A friend of Jones said he missed an inning and a half on the hot-dog line. "Take a sandwich in your pocket," said Jones. "It's against the law," his friend said.)

The fans began to boycott the Diamondbacks. There was nothing organized about this. No picket signs, no parading. It was invisible. The fans just stayed away from Bank One Ballpark. Rumors flourished that the Diamondbacks were about to move to Salt Lake City. Some people said they never should have come in the first place—Phoenix was already big-league enough. Didn't Phoenix already have big-league teams in three sports? Who needed four?

One day in September, Gussie gave Jones a ticket. Jones had not yet attended a game in Bank One Ballpark. With a sandwich in his pocket he went on a Wednesday night and saw what he called "a good ball game." For Jones almost any baseball game was "a good ball game." He sat practically alone in the vast quiet of the ballpark. Gosh, there were only 8,000 people there. What had happened to the baseball-hungry, baseball-mad, fervent, ardent, screaming, passionate, hollering crowds? Parking was easy—the parking attendant seemed to have been called away. There was no delay in the refreshment line. The lavatory sparkled.

The Diamondbacks lost the game. They had played very well, and they would have won if only the other fellows hadn't played better. After the final out of the game Jones stood and applauded.

He thought how fortunate the team was — it had nowhere to go but up. He felt he, too, was only beginning. He returned the next day with another sandwich in his pocket. The crowd dwindled to 5,000.

He rather liked this ball park. After all, no ball park had ever resembled Eden. It was only steel and cement like any other. Jones had known that this was how it would be. He gave himself credit for the instinct of his critical, cranky mind. He had kept cool. He had honored his memory of experience above mere hope. He had not expected miracles. He had been following baseball for many many years and he had never heard a single miracle.

He felt himself keenly alive in a big-league ball park. He felt himself also for a moment confident that fans who yearned to think of themselves as alive in a big-league city would surely feel and understand that they were going to have to live with a ball club under all circumstances. The Diamondbacks had begun at the bottom. There was nowhere to go but up. The fans would grow up with the team.

The Diamondbacks won. Jones applauded. Here came Gussie down the row. "Hey, Jones," he said, "it's another one-game winning streak. Did you ever seen such a small crowd? Where's all the people?"

"I'm here," Jones said.

"Well, you're a fan," said Gussie.

Mark Harris makes his home in Tempe, Arizona, where he is a professor of English at Arizona State University. He is best known for his baseball novels, including the contemporary classics Bang the Drum Slowly, The Southpaw, A Ticket for a Seamstitch *and* It Looked Like Forever.

Through the Eyes of the Official Scorer

By Gary Rausch

The caller to the post-game radio talkshow was upset.

"Who are these official scorers anyhow?" he demanded of the host. "At this rate the Diamondbacks will have a Gold Glove infield."

It was a few games into Arizona's franchise-opening homestand when, while driving home from Bank One Ballpark one evening, it hit me for the first time: I was an official scorer for a major league baseball team.

Hearing some irate fan complaining about the lack of errors being assigned was my "welcome to 'The Show' message."

Though scorers aren't subjected to the second guessing that goes with being a big league manager, umpire or player, you suddenly realize people are paying attention to your decisions. And every fan believes he/she can do a better job than you.

But after all the post-game, spleen-venting verbiage, would any fan really want to sit in my seat on a regular basis?

I work for the National League, but unlike umpires, there's no assurance I'll be asked to return for the year 2000 season. Recent seasons of discontent have managers and public relations directors raising the question of replacing current scorers with individuals more attuned to the game.

We official scorers have never been under more scrutiny. A lot of it started when baseball writers were forced to give up the job under orders from their bosses, who said it took away from their primary reason for being in the press box and considered it a conflict of interest. The writers were replaced by retired baseball writers or people like myself.

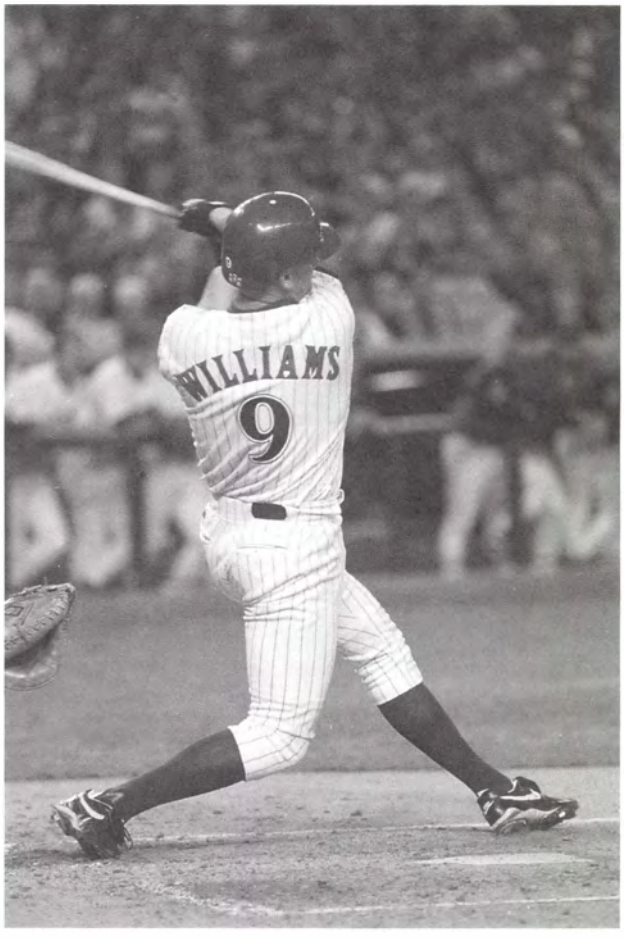
One movement is to add a fifth umpire to each crew. Instead of moving to third base, the home plate umpire might spend his next game in the press box.

My question to that is, won't it create more friction between player and umpire if an umpire is now denying a player a base hit in a hit-or-error situation? And it opens up the normally reclusive umpires to inquiries from the media.

Another idea making the rounds is hiring ex-major leaguers to work in tandem with current scorers.

That might test some friendships if the ballplayer-turned-scorer is a recent retiree. Objectivity could become an issue, and we all know ballplayers are not known for that trait.

And would any umpire or ex-ballplayer be willing to complete the pre- and post-game paperwork required of official scorers? Umpires would probably receive an extra night's pay, but a former ballplayer would undoubtedly want more compensation for his aggravation.



Matt Williams

We National League scorers are being paid $100 a game this season, a $30 increase over 1998. The fact that we receive our compensation in one lump sum when the season is completed—American League scorers are paid following the All-Star Game and regular season finale—can make this a labor of love during the dog days of summer.

Our most important task is to make the correct call as quickly as possible. It's that simple.

None of these thoughts went racing through my head when the first big league player objected to one of my calls.

One night during the first homestand against Colorado, Arizona catcher Jorge Fabregas hit a grounder between Vinny Castilla and the third base bag. Castilla took about one step

toward the bag and made a backhanded attempt to field the ball.

The ball clanked off the heel of his glove and bounced toward the base with Vinny in hot pursuit. He finally gloved the ball as it hopped over the bag, wheeled but didn't throw.

I immediately gave Diamondbacks public relations director Mike Swanson the universal sign for a fielding error, an extended thumb pointing downward. It's a sign that can be seen easily by the radio and television broadcasters and the scoreboard operator in booths that fan off to my left.

No questions were raised until Fabregas approached Swanson in the Arizona clubhouse after the game. He told Swanson how Castilla had come to the plate an inning or so later and told him that he thought I had robbed Jorge of a hit on that play.

Vinny was planting a seed and also playing the age-old win-win game; base hit for Fabregas and no error for him. Swanson relayed Fabregas' plea to review the tape and consider a scoring change.

I tape every Diamondback game, home and away, that's televised in our market. That allows me to review my work as well as other scorers, but, more importantly, if I have erred, justice will be served and the decision will be reversed.

One of my three VCRs has super slow-motion, allowing me to break down a play into individual frames of action. One angle of the play in question that I didn't remember seeing in the press box that evening came from a camera high above where I sat.

It clearly showed the bounding baseball nearly three-fourths to Castilla, and Fabregas only about one or two steps out of the left-handed batter's box. The TV director also ran a split-screen shot showing Castilla recovering the ball just in front of the third base coaching box and turning back toward the playing field—at the very moment Fabregas touched first base.

Video replays proved to me that there was no way Fabregas would have beaten a throw to first base had Castilla played the ball cleanly. Fabregas is noted for his lack of foot speed.

And I believe no batter can reach first base safely if he hasn't reached the 45-foot mark when the infielder gloves the baseball. Fabregas was well short of that chalk stripe when Castilla first touched the baseball.

The only call I reversed all season came in a series with Pittsburgh. Jermaine Allensworth, then a Pirate, hit a tapper just left of the pitching mound that shortstop Jay Bell fielded on the run and threw wild to first base. It appeared to be a bang-bang play, and I ruled it a base hit.

There were no dissenting voices heard in my vicinity of the press box. The official scorer's seat that I shared last season with Bob Eger and John Olson is three or four chairs to the right of Swanson, who sits directly in front of the visiting PR director and the visiting media. Grumbles from the visiting writers are clearly audible.

While scoring I'll often make a mental note of a play I want to see again, but not necessarily to make a change. The Bell-Allensworth play was one of those. Upon further slow-motion review late that evening, I saw that Bell had not been forced to throw across his body as I surmised. He'd run a quick circle pattern to his right that allowed him a direct path toward first base.

In addition, Allensworth was a good stride or stride-and-a-half from the base when the errant throw arrived. It wasn't the bang-bang play I thought I saw. Verdict: I changed the call from a hit to a throwing error on Bell.

Curiously, Allensworth, playing in center field, figured in another of my scoring decisions that same series. It was probably the most controversial call I made all season.

Matt Williams stroked a low line drive into the right-center field gap that skipped under Allensworth's glove and continued to the fence for a triple. Both Arizona play-by-play announcers, Thom Brennaman on TV and Greg Schulte over radio, described the play and expected a call of hit and error. They, and several writers in the press box, expressed surprise when I ruled it a triple all the way.

We Diamondbacks scorers have the benefit of a small TV monitor at our seat as well as large monitors hanging from the press box ceiling. My first action was pointing to an overhead monitor, alerting Swanson that I wanted to see a replay. After seeing the replay I made my call.

It was the first play I went to later at home. I ran and re-ran it, in regular and slow-motion. After about 10 reruns at both speeds, I decided my call would stand.

The next day I was carrying my meal tray into the dining room 90 minutes before the first pitch. I heard the unmistakable voice of Schulte. "Hey, Gary," he yelled. Knowing he had only one thought in mind, I replied, "All right, you want me, you got me."

I've known Greg for many years. His radio partner Rod Allen, Brennaman and his TV sidekick Bob Brenly are recent acquaintances. I have nothing but respect for their opinions, particularly former big leaguers Allen and Brenly.

Schulte and Brennaman were the only ones at the table and I sat down right between them. "OK, you each tell me what you saw," I said.

After listening to their descriptions, I gave them mine. Williams' ball was hit on a line and probably never got more than 10 feet off the ground. It carried tremendous topspin, hitting the ground and bouncing only once more before it skidded under a fully extended Allensworth and his outstretched glove.

The camera above the press box picked up the ball at

impact. As the camera panned upward, I first saw Allensworth's feet and then the rest of his body. I counted 16 strides before the ball crossed his path. He'd made a long run on a dead sprint and I wasn't going to penalize him with an error because a ball that touched grass only twice to that point had so much topspin that it shot under his glove.

Williams was involved in my only face-to-face with a player or manager last season. In a game against Houston, he smacked a ball right at Sean Berry. The Astros' third baseman moved his glove an inch or two toward his right hip before the ball hit leather and got past him. I ruled it an error and heard some boos from the stands.

The play occurred sometime in the middle innings and Williams was on the phone to the press box within two minutes of the final out. Unable to meet with him that night, I agreed to talk following batting practice the next day.

To be fair, I asked Houston Public Relations director Rob Matwick to get Berry's side of the play. When Berry said it could have gone either way, that told me he was more than willing to accept the error. Like Castilla earlier in the season, a fielder would rather see a play scored a hit rather than accept an error—so long as it doesn't show up his pitcher and affect his earned run average.

Williams and I talked for about 20 minutes in a clubhouse office the following day. He told me why he thought the play should have been scored a hit and I told him what I saw and why I scored it an error. I told him about asking for Berry's version, and relayed what his third base counterpart said.

Matt and I knew each other from his days playing with San Francisco's Triple-A farm club in Phoenix. I told him that his play in the field had raised the bar for fellow third baseman. However, I believe any major league third baseman should have made that particular play.

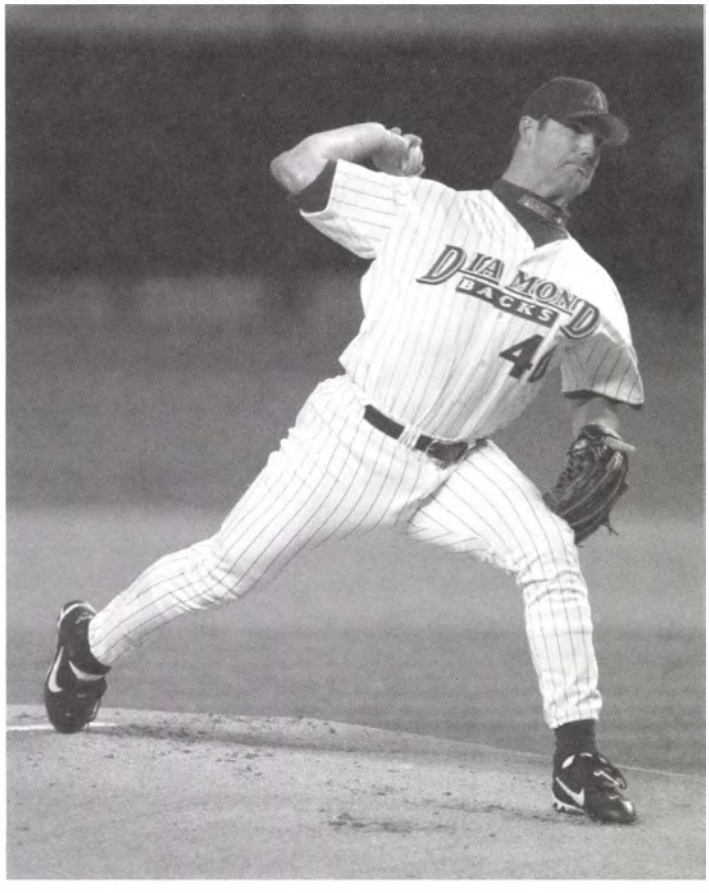
My scoring of Diamondbacks games did affect my work in the Arizona Rookie League—for only one game. The short-season league opened play in late June, and I worked a Phoenix A's—Mesa Cubs contest at Mesa's HoHoKam Park.

A Cubs batter drove a ball deep. The A's center fielder made a long run, appeared to start gliding and then had the ball bounce out of his upraised and extended glove. I ruled it an error.

Later, Cubs manager Nate Oliver, a former major league infielder I'd watched with the Dodgers, questioned my call. I told him I had made that same call that evening on then-Diamondbacks' center fielder Devon White. Oliver smiled as I realized what I was saying.

I was comparing a youngster six weeks removed from high school graduation with one of the best center fielders in the game. What might have been routine for Devon White was certainly not routine for a fuzzy-cheeked 17-year-old.

And that word "routine" is the key word for any scorer.



Andy Benes throws the first pitch in Arizona Diamondbacks history on March 31, 1998

It's mentioned in the rule book several times and one every scorer must remember when deciding hit-or-error.

I didn't just arrive at the Diamondbacks' downtown jewel of a stadium last spring on one of those snail-paced freight trains passing along its southern property line. This native Southern Californian started keeping score of games—I didn't say scoring games—in the early 1950s.

Raised on Pacific Coast League baseball, I'd buy a scorecard and keep track of the Los Angeles Angels at Wrigley Field and the Hollywood Stars at Gilmore Field. Their televised games were abundant.

My passion for the game continued long after my playing career ended in high school. As a sportswriter, I was always covering games and knowledge of scoring rules was vital when I became a university sports information director.

Like the majority of players on the field, I plied my scoring trade in the minor leagues for several years. It delighted me to see fellow big league rookie Desi Relaford come into town last season wearing a Philadelphia uniform.

Relaford and I were rookies together in 1990; he a recently drafted high school senior shortstop and me a first-time official scorer at the professional level. We were both

assigned to the Seattle Mariners' affiliate in the Arizona Rookie League.

We've both come a long way from games that began on warm summer mornings and often ended in searing afternoon heat. To this day, the back fields at the Tempe Diablo Stadium Complex still offer little escape from the sun's fierce rays.

That's one reason I appreciate the air-conditioned splendor of Bank One's press box. Another is the relative speed of play. Sometimes a 2 1/2-hour game seems long until I remember that 1991 season when the Mariners' 28 home games averaged—averaged mind you—3 hours, 5 minutes.

I'm sure Relaford thought he was ready for the big leagues last year. I never doubted my credentials either.

Entering the 1998 campaign, I'd scored 567 professional games over the previous seven seasons: 254 in the Arizona Rookie League, 2 California League, 247 Arizona Fall League and 64 Pacific Coast League. My norm for each of the previous four years was an even 100 games.

Like anyone scoring baseball, I've developed my own particular baseball shorthand. What I've found most beneficial is the use of colored ink pens. People say I'm the only official scorer they've ever seen who works in Technicolor.

Long ago I noticed someone using a red pen to denote significant plays, like errors or runs batted in. I decided—why not use a lot of different colors?

Black remains my base color. Red is for errors, sacrifices, stolen bases, passed balls, interference; green for walks, hit batters, balks; orange for runners left on base, and pink for RBIs and home runs. I use purple for plays made by outfielders and aqua for the remaining six positions.

The whole premise is not to make a scoring work of art, but to expedite my post-game activities. No matter what the level, official scorers are paid a set fee; we're not hourly employees. Consequently, when the game ends, we're on our own time.

Using different colors makes it easier for me to fill in all the categories on the statistical forms used at the major and minor league levels. And I use the same color scheme whether I'm sitting in the press box front row of a Diamondback or Fall League game or in a lawn chair behind the backstop of a rookie league contest.

I understand how a fan might question whether I was prepared to work at the major league level. Everyone's an expert. Just because you keep track of a game's progress with a scorecard doesn't make you an official scorer.

That reminds me of the Fall League's opening season in 1992. One of the general managers hired his brother as the club's official scorer. Selection was based on the siblings having kept score of two or three games each day via the family's satellite dish.

Until the Fall League, he'd never made the hit-or-error call. Indecision was quickly compounded by panic as the scoreboard operator clamored for a thumbs-up or thumbs-down.

Not only was he prone to make the wrong call, he was oblivious to the rules of scoring and their vagaries. And the length of time it took him to fill out the post-game report rivaled the time of game.

Had he come up through the ranks, he would have assuredly survived. It's a lot like expecting a modern-day player to succeed in the majors without ever spending a day in the minors.

I'm often asked why I continue scoring Rookie and Fall League games. One reason is I'm forever grateful to the league officials for giving me the opportunity originally. Another is I believe in staying sharp and the lower levels of play provide that.

Every scoring decision known to man will pop up in the rookie leagues. Matt Williams will field a slow tapper up the third base line and instantly know whether to try to throw the batter out or concede a hit and stick the ball in his back pocket, so to speak.

Conversely, a rookie leaguer is more likely to attempt a hurried throw on that same exact play. How many times I've seen that throw airmailed over the first baseman's head. The ball rattles along the fence as the batter heads for second.

The rightfielder finally tracks it down after a quirky carom and, seeing the batter rounding second, hurriedly attempts to nail him at third. A Herculean relay sails well over the third baseman and the batter easily scores. A base hit that travels no more than 45 feet results in a run courtesy of two errors.

Like any player, manager, umpire, I have my goals. First, I'd love to be the official scorer for a playoff game and someday an All-Star Game. The ultimate, naturally, would be to be chosen to handle a team's World Series home games.

My feeling is every one of us can do one thing really well. Unfortunately, we spend most of our lives failing to realize we have that one special gift. Mine just happens to be scoring baseball games at the professional level.

Gary Rausch previously worked as the sports information director at UCLA and USC, and was a sportswriter in Phoenix for many years. He is serving as one of the Diamondbacks official scorers in 1999 for his second straight season.

"Bucking" the Odds: Showalter's Bases-Full Intentional Walk

By Ed Price

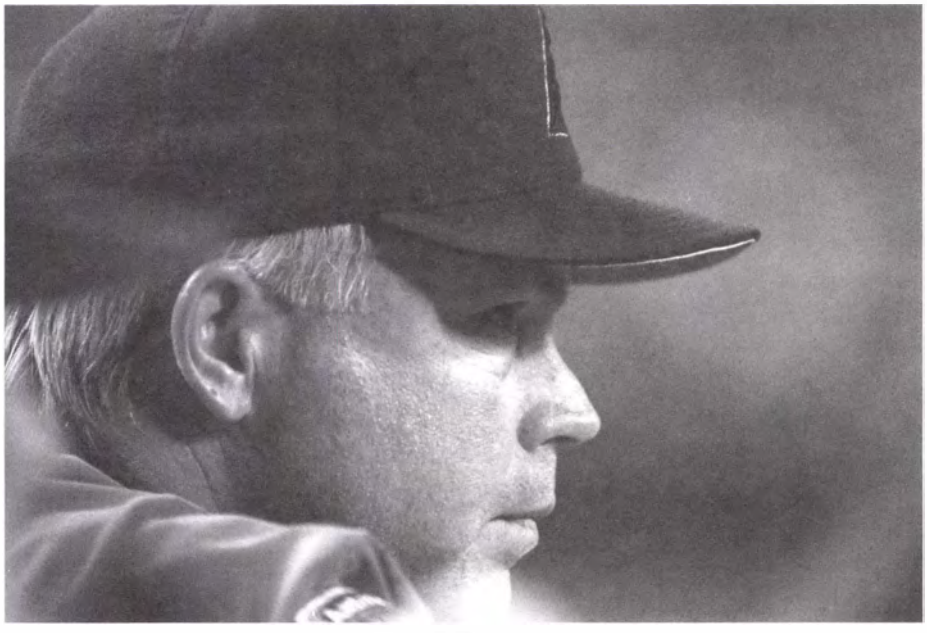


Photo Credit: Barry Gossage

Every baseball season includes some novel and unusual events that standout from the ordinary. Ed Price, the Diamondbacks' beat writer for the Tribune Newspapers, *thought the D-Back's most extraordinary moment during its inaugural season was Manager Buck Showalter's decision to intentionally walk Barry Bonds with the bases loaded.*

Gregg Olson called it "sane." Few may agree.

After Buck Showalter ordered Barry Bonds intentionally walked with the bases loaded and two outs in the ninth inning last May 28th, forcing in a run that cut the Arizona Diamondbacks' lead to one, the D-Backs prevailed 8-7 over the San Francisco Giants.

Olson went to a full count on Brent Mayne after the walk to Bonds. But the strategem, rare if not unparalleled in baseball history, paid off when Mayne lined out to right field to end the game.

"Our manager has elephantitis of the nuts," said starting pitcher Brian Anderson, who watched on TV in the clubhouse as the move helped preserve his first victory in over seven weeks. "I thought I'd seen it all. I've never seen anything like this, the frickin' biggest sac move I've ever seen in my life.

"There wasn't even a frickin' doubt. No other manager makes that move. They play by the book. Buck could give a frog's fat ass."

Fumed Mayne: "They got lucky, Buck got lucky, Olson got lucky. If they do it again, I'll hit another [expletive] rocket.... I hope it happens again. I thoroughly enjoyed that situation. It was fun."

As far as anyone could determine, Buck Showalter is the first manager in 45 years to intentionally walk a batter with the bases loaded. Yet Showalter refused to call it the "right" move.

The only other documented basesloaded intentional walk was issued to the Cubs' Bill "Swish" Nicholson on July 23, 1944. In the second game of a Sunday doubleheader, New York Giants manager Mel Ott had Nicholson put on in the top of the eighth inning, forcing in a run that tied the game, 10-10. Nicholson, who would finish second in MVP voting after leading the NL with 33 homers and 122 RBI, had already hit four homers in the doubleheader and one each on Friday and Saturday.

The Giants won the game, 12-10.

"[Fifty-four] years?" Olson said. "That's pretty good."

"I've heard about it, but I haven't actually seen it," Giants manager Dusty Baker said. "It was a gutsy move, but it worked. I don't know if I would do it. Each man has to walk in his own shoes."

"Just because it hasn't been done isn't a reason to do it or not do it," Showalter said. "There's only three or four people in the game I would consider it with, and Barry is one of them."

It was not some instantaneous hunch. Showalter had anticipated the situation and even thought about issuing Bonds a free pass in the eighth, with the score 7-5 and a man on first.

"We've got a run to play with there [in the ninth] and [Olson's] just about out of gas," he said. "We've got a choice between one of the great players in the game and a guy who's a very good player in Brent Mayne. I understand it was really unorthodox, but I had a lot of confidence 'Oly' could get out of it.

"What do you think has a better chance of happening: [Olson] walking another batter or Barry getting a base hit there?"

"I don't even want to discuss it," said Bonds.

Here's what Showalter was facing. After walking J.T. Snow to load the bases, Olson had thrown 40 pitches. Ready in the bullpen were right-hander Russ Springer, who was not at full strength because of the flu, and lefty Efrain Valdez, who had pitched the previous two nights and was last in the majors in 1991.

Before that game, Bonds had faced Olson twice, walking him both times. Against Springer, Bonds was 0 for 4 with two walks and a strikeout. And he had never faced Valdez.

Mayne, also a left-handed hitter, had never faced Valdez either. Mayne was 2 for 6 against Olson before flying out and 1 for 5 with three strikeouts against Springer.

But Showalter had decided to go with Olson, despite his control problems and struggles with a wet mound, rather than a sick Springer or tired Valdez. And he didn't want Bonds to tie the game with a hit.

"I've never seen it," Showalter said of the run-scoring free pass. "I understand what the normal procedure is in most situations. But I don't think anybody in our dugout thought anything positive was going to happen with Barry Bonds hitting. When I had a chance to bypass that possibility, we did.

"It's a situation as a manager where you don't ask a bench coach, you don't ask a coach. It's your decision. You don't put somebody [else] on the spot.

"It doesn't make me right or wrong because it worked," he said. "I've made some moves in my career that I know in my heart were right but didn't work on the field, because we're dealing with human beings."

"I gave it the triple take," catcher Kelly Stinnett said. "I had to look three times to make sure what I was seeing. At the time, I thought, 'Wow,' but if you think about it, it's playing the percentages. The guy's going to score anyway if Bonds gets a single."

Said Olson: "Buck had the confidence and faith in me to get the next guy out. I appreciate it. It was interesting."

Interesting? To say the least.

Ed Price covers the Arizona Diamondbacks for the Arizona Tribune Newspapers, *serving suburban Phoenix. A version of this article appeared in the* Tribune *and is reprinted with permission of the author.*

A Look Back at the 1997 Expansion Draft

When the Arizona Diamondbacks and Tampa Bay Devil Rays made their picks at the Expansion Draft on November 18, 1997, the "conventional wisdom" was that the drafted players would form the future nucleus of the two teams. But Arizona and Tampa Bay have followed different paths in developing their ballclubs since the expansion draft. The Diamondbacks have pulled the trigger on numerous trades and have been aggressive in the free agent market. In contrast, after two expansion draft-day transactions, the Devil Rays were quiet on the trade front and more cautious signing free agents.

One result of these different approaches is that Tampa Bay continues to rely heavily on its expansion draft picks while the D-Backs have primarily filled their major and minor league rosters with players from other sources. The numbers as of Opening Day '99:

- Only seven of the D-Backs' 35 expansion draft picks made the club's opening day major league roster.
- Only 12 of the 35 expansion picks remain in the Diamondbacks' organization.
- Thirteen of the Tampa Bay's 35 expansion draftees opened on the major league roster and 23 are still in the Devil Rays' system.

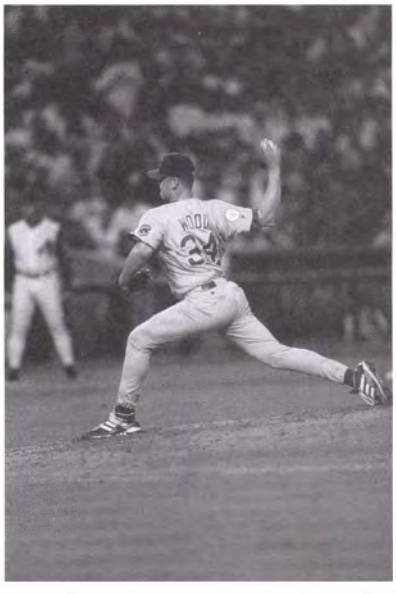
But these raw numbers do not tell the whole story. The D-Backs have traded 11 players selected in the expansion draft to obtain several players on this year's team. The following D-Backs were acquired in trades involving expansion draft picks: Andy Fox (for Todd Erdos and Marty Janzen), John Frascatore (for Clint Sodowsky), Bernard Gilkey (for Jorge Fabregas and another player), Luis Gonzalez (for Karim Garica), Darren Holmes (for Ben Ford) and Matt Williams (for Tom Martin and another). In addition, the trades for Matt Williams and Dante Powell involved players that the club had acquired for other expansion draft picks.

Looking back to the 1992 Expansion Draft, the Diamondbacks are more closely following the lead of the Florida Marlins than the Colorado Rockies. In the second season of those franchises, eight Marlins expansion draft picks opened with the big club while the Rockies' opening day roster had 12 expansion draftees.

The more surprising fact is that almost two-thirds of Arizona's expansion picks are no longer with the organization after only one full season. The team's 34.3% one-year retention rate is lower than the other three recent expansion clubs (Devil Rays-65.7%, Rockies-55.5%, Marlins-50%).

The Triple-A Phoenix Firebirds' opening day roster in 1996 included four former first round draft picks. From left to right: Jacob Cruz, Steve Soderstrom, Marcus Jensen and Shawn Estes.

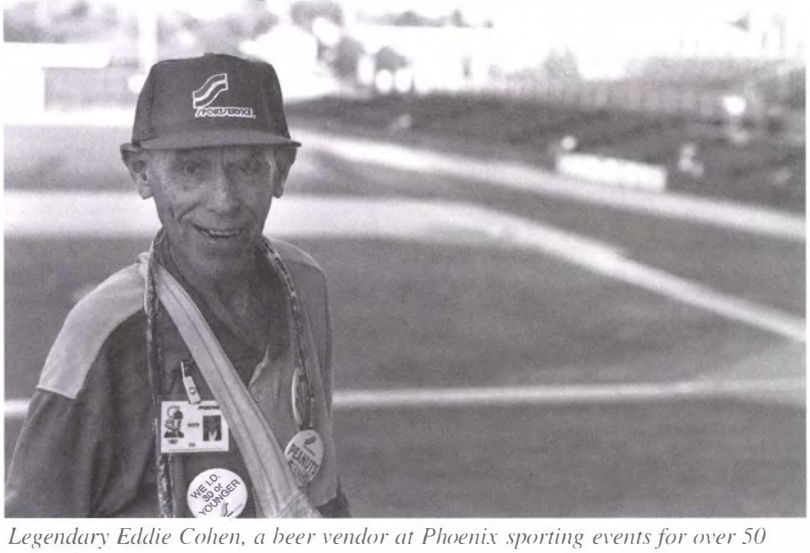
A crowd of 6,217 fans savors the Phoenix Firebirds' final regular season game at Scottsdale Stadium in 1997.



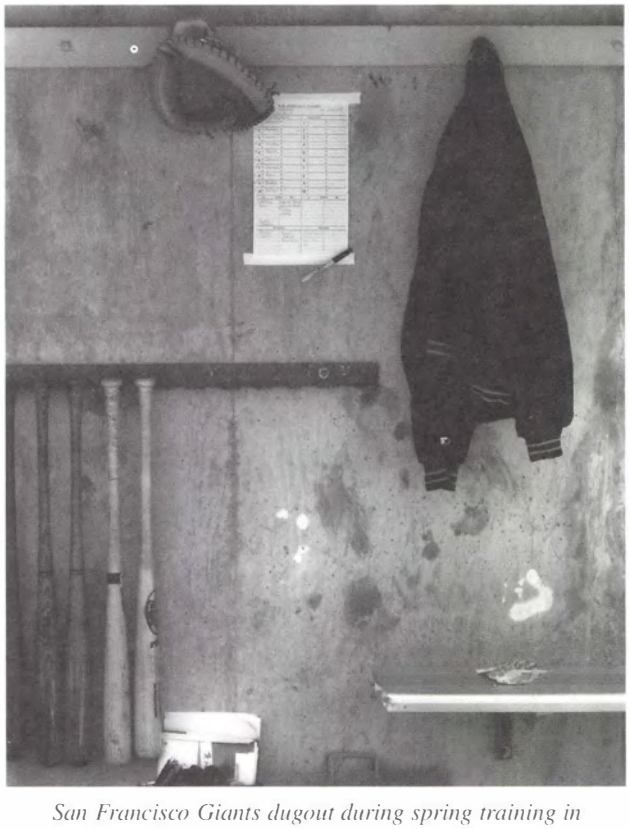
One highlight of the Arizona Diamondbacks' inaugural season was Chicago Cubs rookie sensation Kerry Woods' record-breaking outing at Bank One Ballpark on May 11, 1998. After tying the Major League record by striking out 20 hitters five days earlier, Woods added 13 Diamondback victims in seven innings to set the Major League record of 33 strikeouts in back-to-back games.

The relaxed, jovial atmosphere of a 1994 Spring Training game at Scottsdale Stadium.

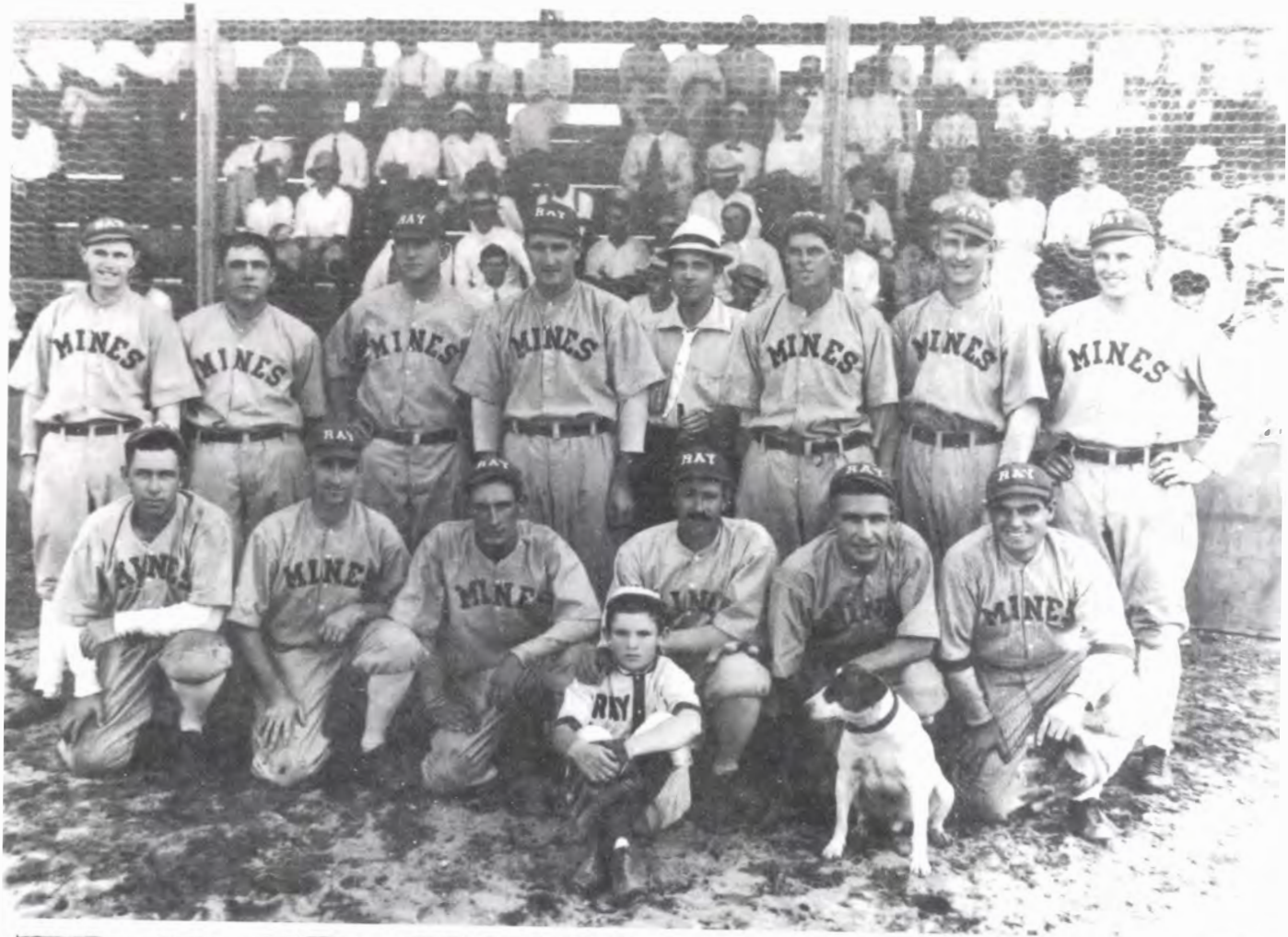
a denton hanna photo retrospective



Legendary Eddie Cohen, a beer vendor at Phoenix sporting events for over 50 years, at a Phoenix Firebirds' game in 1997.



San Francisco Giants dugout during spring training in Scottsdale, 1994.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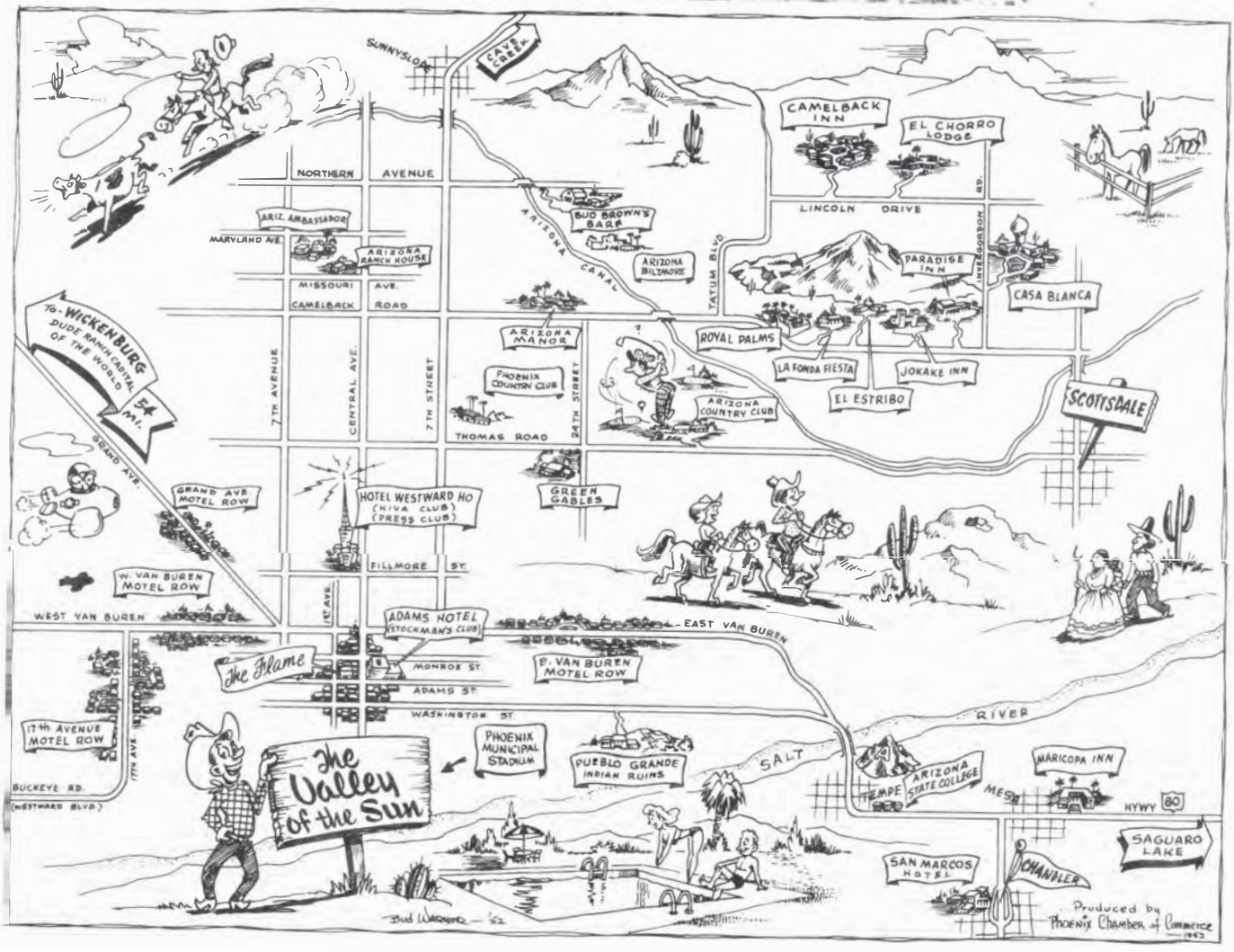
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CAMELBACK INN
EL CHORRO LODGE
NORTHERN AVENUE
LINCOLN DRIVE
ARIZ. AMBASSADOR
MARYLAND AVE.
ARIZONA RANCH HOUSE
BUD BROWN'S BARN
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ARIZONA CANAL
TATUM BLVD.
PARADISE INN
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MISSOURI AVE.
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ROYAL PALMS
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ARIZONA COUNTRY CLUB
SCOTTSDALE
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