

Reggie Rawlings, "Legend of the Blue Ridge"

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Over its' 15 year existence from 1915 to 1930, with a one year (1919) hiatus for World War I, the Blue Ridge League produces numerous major league players, including two future Hall of Famers - pitcher Lefty Gomez and outfielder Hack Wilson. However, the league's most recognizable player is arguably George "Reggie" Rawlings, a talented outfielder who plays his entire 13 year minor league career in the Blue Ridge League, including 12 with the Martinsburg (W.Va.) Blue Sox.

Rawlings finishes his career as the league's all-time leader in games played (1,242), batting average (.330), hits (1,560), doubles (268), triples (47) and home runs (183). Three times he leads the Blue Ridge League in home runs, three times in batting average and three times in base hits. His 26 home runs in 1922 are the third-highest single season total in league history and his 25 in 1923 rank fourth.

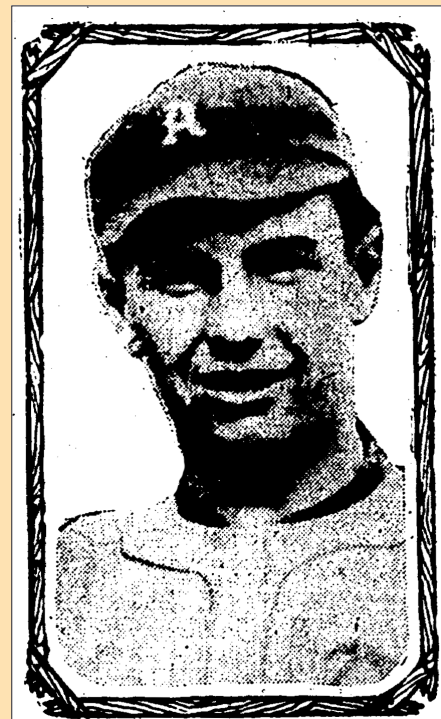
Born June 13, 1891, in Washington, D.C., and a product of that city's ultra competitive amateur league, Rawlings is considered by many the best amateur player in the region. In the fall of 1911, Rawlings, third baseman Burton Shipley and first baseman William "Country" Morris sign with the Worcester Busters of the New England (B) League. The next spring both Shipley and Morris report to Busters to begin their professional baseball careers but Rawlings has a change of mind and refuses to report citing a "sore arm".

Three years later (1915) Rawlings and the Blue Ridge League make their professional baseball debuts simultaneously. A rail-thin (6-0, 160-pound) 24-year-old rookie for Martinsburg, Rawlings hits a solid .325 with 16 doubles, five triples and two home runs leading the Blue Sox to the league's inaugural championship.

After three solid years in his adopted hometown of Martinsburg, Rawlings enters the military at the end of the 1917 season and misses the next two seasons. Returning to the Blue Sox in time for the 1920 campaign, Rawlings picks up where left off two years earlier hitting .303 with 21 doubles and 10 home runs.

In 1921, Rawlings tries his hand at managing when the Martinsburg owners fires manager Joe Ward only four games into the season. Persuaded by his friend "Country" Morris, now the player/manager of the Waynesboro Villagers, to take the job, Rawlings manages the Mountaineers to a second place finish.

Reggie Rawlings Year by Year:												
Year	Team	League	Lev	G	AB	R	HT	2B	3B	HR	SB	AVG
1910	Washington Herald Newsboys	Commercial	Amt	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	---
1911	C&P Telephone	Commercial	Amt	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	---
	American Security & Trust	Bankers	Amt	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	---
1912	American Security & Trust	Capital City	Amt	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	---
1913	American Security & Trust	Capital City	Amt	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	---
1914	Immanuel	NW Sunday League	Amt	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	---
	Emerald	Rosedale	Amt	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	---
1915	Martinsburg Champs	Blue Ridge	D	71	280	49	91	16	5	2	13	.325
1916	Martinsburg Blue Sox	Blue Ridge	D	102	366	62	102	17	6	7	-	.279
1917	Martinsburg Blue Sox	Blue Ridge	D	99	390	64	118	21	4	10	-	.303
1919	Landis Tool Company	Waynesboro	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	---
1920	Martinsburg Mountaineers	Blue Ridge	D	98	366	49	111	18	2	9	9	.303
1921	Martinsburg Mountaineers	Blue Ridge	D	95	361	77	128	23	3	17	15	.355
1922	Martinsburg Blue Sox	Blue Ridge	D	99	394	82	146	19	4	26	17	.371
1923	Martinsburg Blue Sox	Blue Ridge	D	96	386	104	145	28	6	25	16	.376
1924	Martinsburg Blue Sox	Blue Ridge	D	99	401	78	152	31	1	21	17	.379
1925	Martinsburg Blue Sox	Blue Ridge	D	90	337	65	113	21	1	18	11	.335
1926	Martinsburg Blue Sox	Blue Ridge	D	96	366	68	117	16	3	19	12	.320
1927	Martinsburg Blue Sox	Blue Ridge	D	95	350	75	123	17	7	12	10	.352
1928	Martinsburg Blue Sox	Blue Ridge	D	90	322	37	83	19	1	6	10	.258
1929	Hagerstown Hubs	Blue Ridge	D	112	408	77	131	22	4	11	17	.321
1935	Martinsburg Blue Sox	---	Ind.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	---
Minor League Totals				13 Seasons	1242	4727	8871560	268	47	183	147	.330



Reggie Rawlings
1913 American Security & Trust

A year later, after six seasons in Martinsburg, Rawlings signs with Morris and Waynesboro. However, Rawlings has second thoughts about playing in Waynesboro and asks Morris to trade him back to his adopted hometown of Martinsburg.

Faced with the prospect of playing the season with a disgruntled outfielder, Morris, in one of the worst trades in Blue Ridge League annals, sends his homesick outfielder back to Martinsburg in exchange for another outfielder Ross Petticord. Two weeks later Morris releases Petticord saying he has a weak arm and "didn't look very good."

Reggie Rawlings [2 of 4]:



William "Country" Morris

Back in familiar surroundings and joined by a short and stocky 22-year-old outfielder named Lewis "Hack" Wilson, Rawlings responds with an MVP-type year, leading the league with a .371 average and 108 RBIs. Rawlings also has 19 doubles, four triples and 26 home runs as the Blue Sox edge Morris' Villagers by a game and a half for the league title. After the conclusion of the season Morris files a protest concerning the Rawlings-Peddicord trade to no avail.

In 1923, Rawlings leads the league in batting average (.376), home runs (25), hits (145) and runs scored (104)

leading Earle Mack's Blue Sox to their second-straight league championship, this time by 15 games over Waynesboro. In 1924, Rawlings achieves career-highs in batting average (.379), hits (152) and doubles (31) as Martinsburg ties the Hagerstown Hubs for a share of their third-straight league crown.



1922 Martinsburg Blue Sox

Top Row (from left) - Mick Mullaney (c), unknown, Frank Colley (p) Reggie Rawlings (of), Hank Hulvey (p-of), Norris (1b), Walter Seaman (p-of).
Bottom Row (from left) - Dave Black (2b), Ross Roberts (p), Joe Brehaney (ss), "Hack" Wilson (of), H. Burton Shipley (1b-Mgr), Joe Brophy (3b).

On February 8, 1925, three Martinsburg players - Rawlings, catcher Ed Sherling and outfielder Arthur Woodring - are sold to the Portland Beavers of the Pacific Coast League. Rawlings costs Portland \$2,500 and is described as a "hitter of the big Bertha type."

1910 Washington Herald Newsboys

HERE'S THE WINNING COMBINATION.



PITCHER RAWLINGS, MANAGER GRAF, AND CATCHER MORRIS.

Rawlings to Portland.
Portland of the Coast League, has obtained Outfielder George (Reggie) Rawlings from Martinsburg of the Blue Ridge League. He has been the leading hitter of the league for three years and was the home run champion in 1924.

On March 5, Rawlings reports to Portland's training camp in San Jose, California, for the team's first workout of the spring. James McCool of *The Morning Oregonian* nicknames the 33-year-old Rawlings "Old Folks" because of his age, even with the local papers listing him as "a 28-year-old".

Rawlings' time with the Beavers is limited to two weeks as he decides once again that the lure of West Virginia is too great and requests his release to return to Martinsburg in late March.

After one final season with Hagerstown in 1929, where he hits .321 with 22 doubles and 11 home runs leading the Hubs to the Blue Ridge League pennant, he retires from baseball at the age of 38 after 13 seasons.

Following his playing days Rawlings is employed at the Dunn Woolen Mill in Martinsburg ... in 1935, a 44-year-old Rawlings is reunited with "Hack" Wilson



Dunn Woolen Mill, Martinsburg, West Virginia

Reggie Rawlings [3 of 4]:

when he returns to the playing field one last time with the now independent Martinsburg Blue Sox.



Reggie Rawlings
1913 Washington Bankers

Rawlings dies on July 6, 1954, at the age of 63 in Martinsburg from complications of tuberculosis.

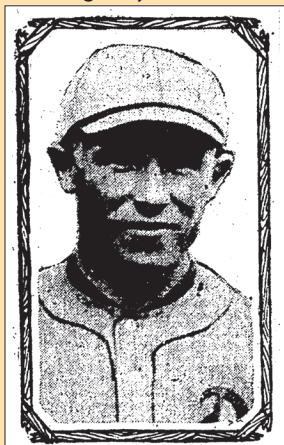
RAWLINGS CHRONOLOGY

May 1910
Graduates from Business High School in Washington, D.C. (now Roosevelt High School).

June 28, 1910
Playing for the Washington Herald's Newsboys amateur team in the District of Columbia's competitive Commercial League, Rawlings walks eight but strikes out 14 in a 9-2 win over the Southwest YMCA.

April 12, 1912
Rawlings refuses to report to the Worcester Club of the New England League ... along with Burton Shipley and "Country" Morris, Rawlings is one of three District of Columbia amateur players signed by Worcester scout Charles Donnelly the prior fall ... Morris and Shipley are already in training camp.

Rawlings says he has a sore arm, "I don't care to go up there and make a bad showing as my arm is weak. I can hardly throw a ball thirty feet. Anyway, I think another year in the amateur ranks will do me a great deal of good, and I will stick with the Bankers."



Burton "Mule" Shipley

March 17, 1920
Rawlings and Washington, D.C., native Lem Owens sign with the Muskegon Muskies of the Class B Central League.

March 1921
Rawlings signs with the Charlotte Hornets of the South Atlantic (B) League.

April 25, 1921
The Charlotte Hornets send Rawlings to the Winston-Salem Twins of the Piedmont (C) League.

May 18, 1922
Outfielder Ross Peddicord, who was traded for Rawlings a couple of weeks earlier, is released by Waynesboro ... Villagers' manager "Country" Morris says Petticord had a weak arm and "didn't look very good."

August 1923
The Rochester Colts of the International League make a "tempting offer" to Martinsburg for the services of Reggie Rawlings ... Colts manager George Stallings want Rawlings to join the club immediately, but the Martinsburg management refuses to let their star outfielder leave the team until the end of the current Blue Ridge League season and the subsequent Five-State Championship Series.

September 1, 1925
Rawlings, the Blue Ridge League's leading hitter, is operated on at the King's Daughters Hospital in Martinsburg for an appendicitis and will miss the remainder of the season.



HAGERSTOWN HUBS

WINNERS OF FIRST HALF PENNANT IN BLUE RIDGE

Standing: left to right, Mickey Kellher, Reggie Rawlings, Fritz Gilbert, Al Lesko, Al Shealey, Emile Meola, Jack Higgins, Frank Rodgers. Kneeling: George Shatzer, Frank Wertman, Earl Feigert, Al Jordan, Paul Koch, Sam Stremus, Fred Fitzberger.

Sign With Muskegon Club

Pitcher Lem Owens and Outfielder Reggie Rawlings have signed with Doc White's Muskegon club of the Central League.

Hornets Send Twins Blue Ridge Outfielder

CHARLOTTE, April 25.—Outfielder Reggie Rawlings, the heavy hitter from the Blue Ridge league, has been turned over to the Winston-Salem club of the Piedmont league by Manager Hooper and left this morning to report to Manager Clancy. Rawlings will play right field for the Twins against Greensboro Wednesday.

"Red" Padgett, the sensational young infielder, also is expected to be sent to the Twins in time for the opening game. Padgett will play second base for Clancy and will be sure to be one of the best in the league. In Heck, Whitman and Rawlings the Twins will easily have the best outfield in the Piedmont.

Both of these men number their friends here by the score. Rawlings will probably lead the Piedmont in hitting or come pretty close to it.

Reggie Rawlings [4 of 4]:

REGGIE RAWLINGS IS GIVEN RELEASE

After serving ten years with the Martinsburg club, having joined the West Virginia aggregation in 1915, George "Reggie" Rawlings was handed his unconditional release yesterday afternoon by President Lewis H. Thompson of the Martinsburg team.

December 9, 1928
Rawlings is handed his "unconditional" release by Martinsburg President Lewis H. Thompson.

January 6, 1930
Released by the Hagerstown Hubs at the end of the 1929 season, Rawlings

indicates that he may play the upcoming season for an "unnamed" club in the Three-I League.

REGGIE RAWLINGS MAY TRY CLASS C LEAGUE

Blue Ridge Veteran Has Offer From Three-I League.
Fourteen Years In Class D.

Martinsburg, W. Va., Jan. 6--Reggie Rawlings, grand old man of the Blue Ridge League, who holds the record for long-time performing in Class D League games, may take a step up the baseball ladder during the approaching season. The veteran has been offered terms by a club in the Three-I League.

Rawlings, a resident of Martinsburg, has played in the Blue Ridge loop since it was organized back in 1915. Up until last year he cavorted around left field for Martinsburg, then went to Hagerstown, to help his old boyhood companion in Washington, Mickey Kelliher, win a pennant for the Hubs. He signed with Hagerstown with the understanding that he was to receive his release at the end of the season, which he did.

It is estimated that Rawlings has played in about 1,300 games in the Blue Ridge. Several times he has been its best home-run swatter. He has never played in another league except the Blue Ridge, but has had numerous opportunities.

July 6, 1954
Rawlings dies at the age of 63 in Martinsburg, West Virginia, from complications of tuberculosis.



1935 Martinsburg Blue Sox

Front Row, Left to Right: Chuck Kilmer, 1B; Carlton Johnson, OF; Lee Denton, 3B; Hartgel Ambrose, 1B; Hunter Lamp, 2B; Dullilier Brumbaugh, Bat Boy; Haywood Ledereck, SS; Hack Wilson, OF/Manager; Buddy Hesson, C; Buck Stevens, C.
Back Row, Left to Right: Wesley Rice, Treasurer; Claude "Hop" Caske, P; Corky Ingram, P; Sewel Roberts, P; Reggie Rawlings, OF; Paul Stotler, Business Manager; Bill Ambrose, INF; Harry Brundle, OF; Wesley McDonald, INF; George Walker, President.